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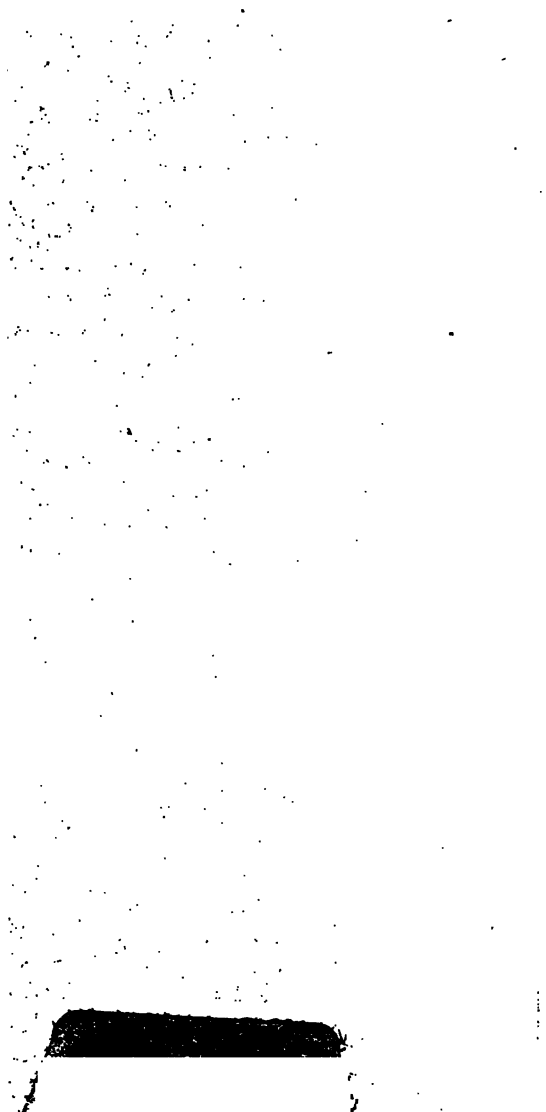
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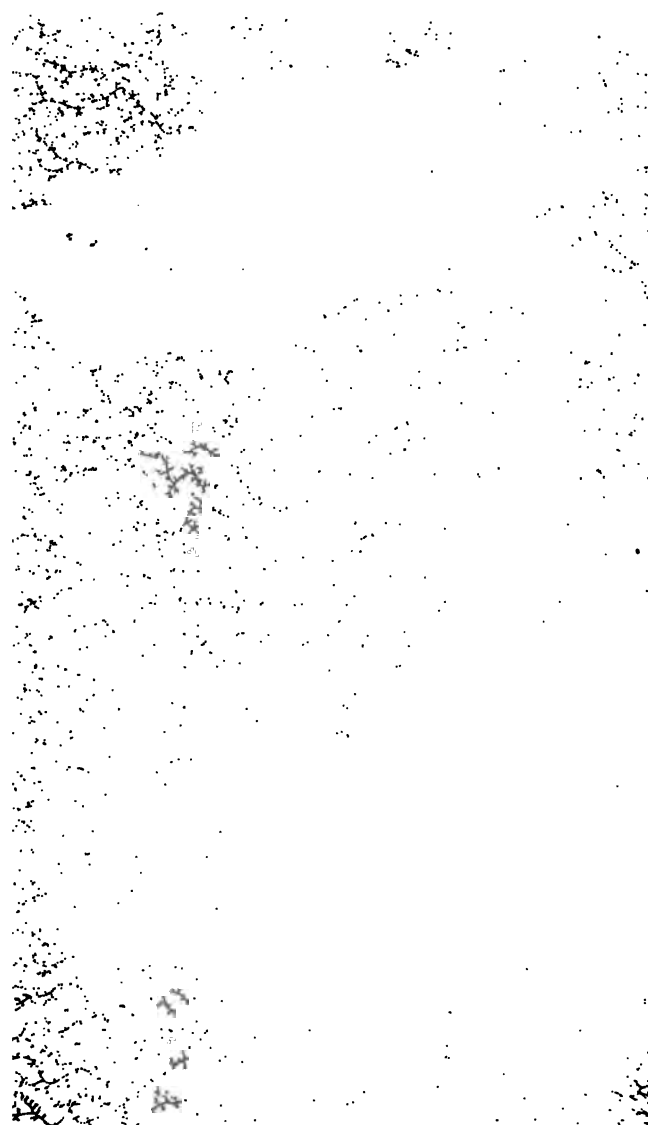
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**THE BORDERLAND OF
SOCIETY BY CHARLES
BELMONT DAVIS**

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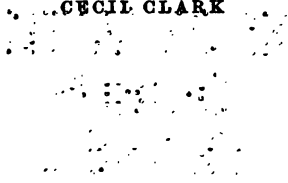
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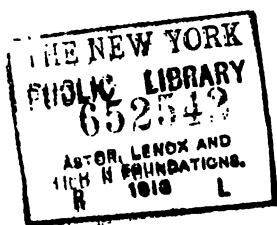
"I HAD A FOOLISH IDEA YOU MIGHT NEVER REALLY
UNDERSTAND EXACTLY WHAT WE WERE," SHE SAID.
—SEE PAGE 71.

THE
BORDERLAND
OF
SOCIETY
BY
CHARLES BELMONT DAVIS

FRONTISPIECE BY
CECIL CLARK



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AUTHOR'S NOTE.

OF THESE STORIES, "OUT OF HER CLASS," AND "A FRIEND OF THE FAMILY," ORIGINALLY APPEARED IN THE CENTURY MAGAZINE; "LA GOMMEUSE" IN HARPER'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE; "A FREAK'S MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM" IN PETERSON'S, AND "THE STORY OF HIS LIFE" IN M'MILLAN'S MAGAZINE. "A WINTER CITY FAVORITE" AND "AT THE CAFÉ CRANTANT" ARE HERE PUBLISHED FOR THE FIRST TIME.

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TO
CECILE LEONIE BRODHEAD

MY VOM
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VOM

A WINTER CITY FAVORITE

A WINTER CITY FAVORITE

The two men hesitated for a moment, and then sat down on a bench facing the crowded terrace. One of them bore the stamp of the tourist and the stranger; the other had a broad, gray felt hat pulled over his eyes, and his clothes, as well as a general air of familiarity with his surroundings, made him a part of the picture.

"I've had twelve days of the sea," said the younger of the two. "I must say I find this crowd much more amusing. Don't you, Cortright?"

"Yes, I think I do." However, the speaker turned slowly and looked out toward the horizon. "But it's a relief to look at the sea sometimes and to know that there is a big world down there under the water of living things that

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don't know a roulette-wheel from a croupier, and that have to do some honest hustling for their next meal."

"But I can't believe," said his friend, "that all these people are as bad as you make them out to be. Now, for instance, that girl there walking with the old man. She certainly is not an adventuress."

"Certainly not," said Cortright; "and there are two reasons why she never could be. She's English and she's stupid. She is doing Monte Carlo just as she does Venice or Rome, and looks on the Casino with the same curiosity that she would at St. Peters or the Doge's palace. She will go into the rooms after breakfast and put five francs on a color, and spend the next week in regretting the gloves she might have bought with them. When I said that all the women at Monte Carlo were adventuresses, I spoke of the people who really belong here; that is, who belong here as much as they do to any place. It is part of

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their circuit, just as Paris and Cairo and Rome and Brussels are. And mind you, when I say 'adventuress' I don't mean that a woman is a Lena Despard or any of the crowd who are generally regarded as specimens of the type. I go back to the old meaning of the word—an adventurer is one seeking for adventure."

"Then," said his friend, "a man who goes to shoot lions in Africa is an adventurer."

"He is," answered Cortright; "and a woman who leaves her home and respectable friends in America for a life at second-rate courts and the first-class society of Monte Carlo or Nice or Rome, however moral she may be, is an adventuress."

"Oh! Then they are not altogether bad—your adventuresses?"

"Not at all. Now, that woman with the child on the next bench. She lives a most enviable life in the American colonies of Paris and Dresden. She says her husband is a contractor in De-

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troit, and that the chill winds of that town do not agree with her child's health. Some people think it strange for a husband to pay a beautiful wife large sums of money to stay abroad, but as long as she gives them good dinners they have never taken the trouble to look farther. Besides, 'dear Will is coming over next spring, and baby and I will go to Switzerland with him for the summer.' I have known her for five years, and 'dear Will' has not arrived yet."

It was past eleven o'clock now, and the terrace was crowded with the strange types of humanity which bow and nod and rub against each other every fine morning during the winter months. It was the yachting week, and the season was at its very best. The balustrade was lined with people with marine glasses watching the toy boats dart in and out of the harbor and circle around the barge which was to act as stake boat, and the two great yachts with their shallow hulls and great spreads of snowy

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canvas glistening defiantly at each other in the hot rays of the morning sun. On the terrace smartly-dressed women and men sauntered slowly up and down the long promenade, laughing and talking in all the languages of the broad world. At their feet lay fair green waters, above them a clear purple sky, about them on every side great spreading palms and mossy rocks gilded with the tropical sun of the Riviera, and at their very hand the paradise of the gambler, where any one may win or lose a fortune in an hour. It was a crowd such as may be seen in any place where the object is to play and not to work. Only for the most part these particular people, from a gradual broadening of their moral principles, had developed a certain callousness for the ordinary pleasures of life, and they needed to feel the tropical sun and the keen sense of the excitement of the place to bring laughter to their lips and to stir their passions for the good or for the bad.

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It was the first time that young Maxwell had been on the Riviera, and it was to him a stage on which he was seeing a splendid spectacle. He had lived, as most Americans do live, in an atmosphere of hard work and honorable intent, where the pleasure comes as but a meagre recompense after a day of work.

"Now, these women just passing?" he asked.

"Oh, they're hardly worth while. The woman, the tall one in black, is interesting. She made a crown princess return to her mother last summer. Do you see how rapidly she walks? That is to keep her figure and—and send to more princesses to their mothers."

"And these two?" asked Maxwell. "The tall girl with the handsome mother?"

Cortright looked for some moments at the two figures coming toward them, and then, turning, glanced out at the sea.

"Well?" asked Maxwell.

"Well, I don't know. If the mother

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were alone I should make a guess, but that girl puts them in a class by themselves."

"I don't think I ever saw a more beautiful American," said Maxwell.

"Nor I," answered Cortright; "and the curious thing about it is that her type isn't at all American. I've seen beauty like that in the little bronzed, half-naked boys lying around the rocks at Capri and Amalfi, but never in a woman. Look at her black curling hair and the big eyes and her color! It's like a beautifully-tinted miniature, and yet in every line she shows the thoroughbred American."

"Have you seen her before?" asked Maxwell.

"I've watched her for a week. She is always here or in the rooms."

"And you don't know who they are?"

"I don't," said Cortright, "because I don't want to. When that girl smiles I feel that the world is good and trusting again, and that all of its women are saints. No, I don't want to know who

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she is. But I'll find out for your sake. There's old Robertson; he'll know.

"Holloa, Robertson!" called Cortright.

Mr. Robertson at the moment was stopping to speak to some women, but he compromised by a smile and a low, sweeping bow of his felt hat, and strolled over to the bench where Maxwell and Cortright were sitting. He stopped in front of the two men, his legs far apart, one hand deep in his coat pocket while in the other swung a massive silver-headed cane.

"Well, my boy," he said, "getting a little air in your lungs before your morning plunge?"

"No," answered Cortright. "I've given up plunging. I want you to meet my friend Maxwell."

Robertson made an impressive bow and shook him warmly by the hand. "A pleasure," he said, "a real pleasure to meet a man from the dear old States! God bless them."

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"It's about twenty years since you've been back there, isn't it?" asked Cortright.

Robertson smiled and put his hand over his heart. "Distance, my boy, distance, you know. You know the Riviera, Mr. Maxwell?"

"No," said Maxwell, "this is my first visit. Cortright is showing me the celebrities."

"Well, there are a few will-be kings and some Paris *Herald* favorites here, but as a crowd"—he turned and looked at the passing throng—"its moral and social assets are light, very light, sir."

"Who are those two tall women," asked Cortright, "just turning this way now?"

Robertson glanced down the promenade, twirled the end of his long mustache, and blew a thin cloud of cigar smoke out toward the sea. "Well," he said, "the girl is called 'La Madonne sans enfants,' and the mother—she's been called a whole lot of names. The

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kindest one is the one she gives herself—Mrs. Carew. I never knew *Carew*. Her first husband was Abraham Martin, a tie contractor; very good sort, too. We were friends. I liked him, and that is the reason she and I are not so intimate as we might be."

"I thought I saw you lunching with them at *Ciro's* the other day," said Cortright.

"You did. I asked them to lunch because I wanted to see that girl smile. Have you noticed it, my boy? I told her every story and yarn I had ever heard or read, and she only smiled once, and that was when I spilled some *Hollandaise* sauce on my duck trousers. That one smile cost me just two hundred and ten francs without the tip."

"Not to speak of the trousers," added Cortright.

"Yes," said Robertson; "and with the trousers it was worth the money." He looked up and nodded and bowed to Mrs. Carew and her daughter as they passed.

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"My boys," he said, "she's the maximum played all over the board. And why that old woman brings her to this place, I don't know. She might have kept her at Nice at least."

"And the mother?" asked Cortright.

"Well, she's about as times permit. It was her fault originally, I believe, and then she tried New York. That is where the Carew incident occurred. But she was too good for the States, so she went to France and Italy, Geneva and Brussels. And then the daughter grew up into the wonder that she is, and the firm became Mrs. Carew and daughter, with the daughter featured. But I think the mother managed things badly. She ought to have arranged a brilliant match for the girl, instead of which she has made her known all over the continent as a winter-city favorite. It's a pity. She deserved something better. Do you want to meet them?"

Maxwell and Cortright signified their willingness by rising abruptly from the

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bench, and the three men followed the women down the terrace. When they had been presented, Mrs. Carew and Robertson fell behind and allowed the three younger people to precede them in their leisurely stroll up the terrace.

"What did you say your friends' names were?" asked Mrs. Carew.

"Well, the short one is Cortright. You ought to know him. He's an expatriated American if there ever was one. The other is young Maxwell, just arrived; nice boy."

"Maxwell?" repeated Mrs. Carew.

"Yes, Maxwell." Robertson stopped swinging his cane and held it suspended for a moment in the air. He regarded the ferule for an instant and then shot a quick glance at Mrs. Carew. "Maxwell," he went on. "You must know the Maxwells of Maxwell's Crossing, near Yonkers. One of the best old families in the State."

"No," mused Mrs. Carew, "I don't know the name."

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"Well," said Robertson, "they are one of the unostentatious kind. No show, just pure worth. Of course, they haven't got the Astors' money, but they are just as solid, and they are one of the few really rich families whose income is rather under than overvalued."

Robertson glanced down under the broad rim of his felt hat and twisted his mustache violently to hide the smile that forced itself to his lips.

"He looks charming," said Mrs. Carew. "Such a strong, honest face."

"Yes," said Robertson, "fine face. Now, he gets that from the family's habit of work. All of the Maxwells work. No loafing around clubs and stage doors for the Maxwells. No late hours and anxiety over gambling debts to draw ugly lines in *their* faces."

"How easy it all is for some people in this world!" said Mrs. Carew, with a half-suppressed sigh.

"Yes," answered Robertson; "but we gamblers all have our day. You've had

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race, or to look out at the flock of tiny sails that were swooping down on the stake boat; and yet he had always been called a keen yachtsman.

Miss Martin owed her reputation to a smile. It was not the curve of her lips nor the fine, even teeth behind them. It was a smile that had an expression of its own, that spoke directly to you, that reflected a silly speech into a witticism. Above all, it seemed to say: "I am so glad I know you. You are a strong man; I am only a girl, and I trust you." Maxwell thought he had never seen any one quite so sympathetic as Miss Martin. Up to the present moment she had said but very little, certainly nothing out of the commonplace. As a listener she was undoubtedly most successful. She nodded her head prettily at the good things that were said, and smiled ceaselessly at the remarks that Robertson and Cortright made at the expense of the people at the tables about them and those passing by.

"Oh," said Robertson, "there's the

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man who does portraits in crayon while you wait. I never had sufficient cause to encourage him before. Miss Martin, won't you sit while we are waiting for something to eat?"

"Certainly," said the girl, "if the sitter is to have the picture. Where shall I look?"

"Look at Maxwell; he is the guest of honor," suggested Cortright.

And so Miss Martin looked at Maxwell, and smiled pleasantly and frankly at him, and he in turn looked back at her, into her clear, wide-open eyes, and wondered if they really had ever deceived any one; and then, involuntarily, he turned to the mother. He saw the same eyes and the same handsome features; but in them he saw no sign of trustfulness nor friendship. Beautiful as she still was, she showed the hard years of straining effort, and above all the lack of peace and the lost faith in good and truth.

The sketch was finished and the break-

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fast came at last, and every one laughed and talked in a most familiar way, and told Maxwell what he must do, and more especially what he must not do at the tables, and every one made plans for little trips and excursions for the whole party to Nice and Mentone and Cap Martin, and gave general invitations for luncheons and dinners which never came off and never were intended to. And then the talk turned on the little Russian doctor who had broken the bank three times the previous afternoon, and on the pretty Polish countess who had been asked to leave her hotel, and no one could imagine any crime for which one would have to leave a Monte Carlo hotel, and altogether the conversation became generally broad, much broader than Maxwell ever remembered having heard before between men and women. But he was glad to see that the girl took no active part in it all, and indeed, at times, seemed to show a certain conscious un-

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consciousness of some of her mother's more worldly remarks.

After breakfast was over and the men had begun to smoke, other men came over from the neighboring tables, and it seemed to Maxwell that every one knew each other so very well, and just how much each one had lost or won, and what they had done the night before, and all about each other generally; and he decided that Monte Carlo was a very small place after all, and that one was either altogether a stranger to it or very much of it, and that he seemed to belong to the latter class. In the days that followed he found that he had been quite right in his opinion.

It was far in the afternoon when the luncheon came to an end, and the party broke up into little groups which by a common consent directed their footsteps toward the Casino. It had been agreed that Robertson, as the oldest and most pessimistic habitu , should be Max-



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well's guide, and so the two men, with Miss Martin, whose restraining influence her mother suggested might be good for Maxwell, strolled through the gardens and across the piazza to the Casino.

"I wonder," said Robertson, as they neared the steps, "just what the sensations of a young man entering the rooms for the first time must be."

Miss Martin stopped short and turned to Maxwell. "Tell us," she said, "just what you expect to find. I think I know—soft music, and beautiful women and hysterical laughter, and a great deal of white and gold for a background, and a desperate young man staggering toward the door with his right hand in his pistol-pocket. Tell us. Am I right?"

"I think in a general way you are," Maxwell smiled and answered slowly, "except that I hardly hoped to see a suicide or the bank broken on the first visit."

"I'm afraid you will be disappointed," said Robertson. "I've known the rooms

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for a good many years, and I've yet to hear a woman's laughter in them. It's not an amusing game."

From the moment that Maxwell passed from the sunshine of the piazza into the plainly-furnished office where he asked for his card of admission, he, too, saw that it was not an amusing game. Every one seemed to be laboring under a great restraint. The blue-coated guards at the door and the white-capped women in the cloak-room, even the little groups of men and women standing in the corridors, seemed to fear to put their feet firmly on the marble pavement or to raise their voices above a whisper lest the sound should echo through the long halls. The flower-girl and the waiters at the buffet received their gratuities with joyless smiles. A careless woman dropped her brass cloak-check on the floor, and the noise rang out with painful distinctness through the long corridors. The guards stopped in their stealthy walk, and the people standing about

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turned sharp, almost angry glances on the wrongdoer.

"If there is any good reason why these people should not be here," suggested Maxwell, "why don't they go home? This reminds me of a stock-exchange on a black Friday. I thought it was going to be rather a gay sort of a place."

But the spell seemed to have fallen on Robertson and Miss Martin, and so without answering they gloomily passed on to the playing-rooms.

Maxwell's first sensations were a consciousness of a stuffy odor, a general lack of light, and a most profound and almost eerie silence, broken only by the low droning of the croupiers and the occasional sharp, ringing click of silver against silver.

"It's not very gay," suggested Maxwell to Miss Martin, under his breath.

The girl smiled. "No," she said, "and it isn't very white and gold, is it?"

"I had an idea," said Maxwell, "that the women were rather of the peacock

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order, and strutted about in fine plumage. Where are they?"

"The women are here all right," answered Robertson, "but the plumage is in their trunks over at the Hotel de Paris. They'll put it on for dinner. Let's stop at this table and have a look at these system players—the martyrs of Monte Carlo."

Maxwell glanced up and down the long, green table, at the white-faced men and women who sat about it. In each case they had a little notebook before them, in which they kept a record and which they consulted with great frequency and earnestness. Occasionally they played a five-franc piece, seldom more, on the table, and then hastily returned their glances to their notebooks until the ball had fallen into its brass pocket with a sharp click and the croupier had announced the number. Whether their money was swept mercilessly into the croupier's money-box, or whether they received back their own

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and a little pile of winnings besides, it apparently made no difference in their humor or altered the mask which they seemed to wear.

"What would you play now?" said a man standing by Maxwell to a woman sitting at the table.

"I," answered the woman, "how should I know? I am a machine." And she tapped the book lying in front of her with her pencil. "If the machine goes wrong—Voilà, ce n'est pas ma faute!"

Nine-tenths of the players were women, and in nearly every case they were dressed in black. They sat behind their books and their little piles of gold and silver, and were quite silent and apparently unaware of the player at their elbow or the crowd back of them. Sometimes they muttered to themselves, "Incredible!" "Impossible!" "It's not to be believed!" and picked up their little pile of gold and silver and ran it through their fingers, and patted it as a woman sometimes pats her child's forehead.

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Maxwell glanced from the faces of the players to the green table with its yellow bars and square letters, almost hidden now under a layer of dirty white silver. A fat, pudgy hand, well jeweled, reached out from the crowd and dropped a roll of thousand franc notes on the red. The players at the table cast a suggestive glance at the obtrusive hand and the crisp notes, but their line of vision extended no further, and they hastily turned back to their books.

"Dix-sept," called the croupier, "noir, impair et manque!" A long, wooden rake shot out from the center of the table, and the bundle of notes and a mass of silver pieces disappeared and left half the table green again. And then from all sides thin hands with long, tapering fingers, looking much like whitened claws, reached out and pulled back the silver that remained.

"I think," said Maxwell, "it is their lack of expression which surprises me

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the most. I quite agree with the lady in black there, 'they are only machines.'"

"They're crazy," said Robertson. "They're monomaniacs. They all have one common enemy. They fight him all day and they dream of him at night, and they wake up struggling against him in the morning. They've lost their strength and their health and their nerves and their money in their fight against him, and yet they climb the hill every day to begin the battle over again."

"And what is the enemy?" asked Maxwell. "The love of gambling or the management?"

"Neither," he answered, smiling. "It's nothing. And yet it built these walls around us. It brought great artists from all over the world to paint the frescoes over our heads, and planned the vaults under our feet and then filled them with untold millions. It has ruined more men than any bourse in the world, and has killed more than die in most battles; it found a family un-

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known and raised it until it stands one of the first in France to-day; it bought a royal home and a principality, and clothes and feeds all the thousands of people in it."

"And yet it is nothing?" asked Maxwell.

Robertson looked at Miss Martin and chuckled. "Yes," he said, "it's the zero. Let's have a look at the *jeu sérieux*."

They found Mrs. Carew at one of the *trente-à-quarante* tables. She had been winning, and her eyes sparkled and her face was flushed with excitement.

"And how do you like it?" she asked Maxwell. "Have you tried your luck? *I've* been doing splendidly;" and she held up her hand full of gold plaques that her daughter might see them. Miss Martin smiled, and glanced at Maxwell to see how he took it.

"I'm afraid," he said, "I'm not a gambler by nature. I can't say it really tempts me, although I love to watch the others."

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"Rouge perds, noir et couleur gagnent," called the croupier.

"There now," said Mrs. Carew, most annoyed, "I should have played noir. It's too bad," and she jabbed a pin viciously through her score-card.

"I think we had better leave you alone," said Miss Martin.

"Do," answered Mrs. Carew. "Take Mr. Maxwell to the pigeon-shooting. He ought to see that, and don't forget, Mr. Maxwell, we expect you to dine with us at the 'Paris' to-night."

Maxwell smiled his acceptance, and followed Miss Martin, who was already on her way out of the rooms. They stood for a moment at the top of the steps, looking down on the crowded piazza.

"Isn't it good to be in the sunshine again?" he said.

Miss Martin glanced up at the flags fluttering from the many-colored Venetian masts planted about the piazza, at the crowd of people gathered at the

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tables of the café opposite, and then up at the clear sky.

"I suppose it is," she said, "but let's go where there is real sunshine—a few less flags and Hungarian bands. Why not drive over to Cap Martin? It's much better than watching a lot of overgrown men shoot innocent pigeons." She beckoned with her parasol to a passing carriage, and a moment afterward they were dashing past the Café de Paris.

"This is really most improper, you know," she said, smiling at Maxwell. "I don't know what those people at the café will think."

Maxwell glanced back at the crowd in front of the café, and mentally shuddered. How was it possible that this girl, apparently so fine, could care what that gang of semi-professional gamblers and declassé women would think.

"If I were you," he said, "I don't believe I should care what they thought. In just what way could their opinion affect you?"

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Miss Martin turned and looked at him with a suggestion of surprise and animosity in her eyes.

"In what way?" she repeated. "In many ways, I am afraid. I don't believe you understand us very well over here."

"I'm afraid I don't," he said; and in his mind he saw again the vulgar crowd at the café, and Miss Martin's look of anxiety to escape their glances as they had passed.

"It's rather difficult to explain," she said. "Well, now at home, in America, I mean, you are born into a certain position, or you make for yourself a certain position—certain friends, a certain environment, a home, I mean, in the broadest sense of the word. It is an axis about which your life revolves. You are known, and you do as you choose. You have family ties, you take a pride in what your grandfather did or what your children may do. Mind you, I don't mean to say that we do not have grandfathers over here. Some of us

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have, but they're not doing us very much good. We might have had an Earl for a grandfather, but a nodding acquaintance with the wife of a member of the Jockey Club 'is really much more valuable to us. Did you ever see a lot of children playing in a public park? They don't care whether their playmates' fathers lost their wealth through a special act of William the Conqueror or made it the year before in packing pork. They like the child with the newest baseball or the toy harness with the most bells on it."

Maxwell looked out at the great stretch of blue sea with its patches of green and purple, and then at the gray-green mountains towering sheer above them.

"You've chosen a pretty park to play in," he said.

"Yes," she answered, smiling; "but the boy with the newest base ball is very trying sometimes, and I often think a little walled-in garden of one's own would be a very pleasant change. We

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had one once. That is, we stopped at a pension in Normandy kept open by mistake during the winter. We were the only guests. We must have been very poor that winter." Miss Martin smiled at her own honesty. "You must think me a very candid person, considering what a short time I have known you, but you are too nice not to be quite honest with. Dear mamma will tell you about our home in America. She will show you photographs of the library and the hallway, and the garden where I used to feed the animals, and then if you are terribly interested she will tell you of an awful encounter I had with a goose, and how it went for my bare legs. That is my cue to blush. Mamma is a very homey person in her conversation."

"And how long has it been," he asked, "since you have really lived at home?"

"Oh," she said, "too long ago to remember anything but the cook and some gold letters on the cake-box. I've only known two real homes since. One is

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two Vuitton trunks with a maid, and the other two Vuitton trunks without one."

"Don't you ever stop very long in one place?" he asked. "I should think it would be so much more satisfactory. You would see more and make more friends, and become to a certain extent a part of your surroundings."

"Sometimes," said the girl, "we stay a whole winter in one place. It all depends on the colony and the minister or the Consul. If he is kind and civil and likes us, we stay quite a long time."

"I never appreciated," said Maxwell, "the power of our representatives before. Are they generally hospitably inclined?"

"Yes," she said, hesitatingly, "nearly always. We have made a great many friends among the secretaries and the younger consuls. Some of the older married men have been a little remiss." Miss Martin smiled. "You see, their wives are often people of not very much experience, and they prefer to take us

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all for adventurers until we prove the contrary. You have no idea how hard that is to do sometimes."

"And then?" asked Maxwell.

"Then? Oh, then we pack up again and go on. We go to another hotel in another town. We have a different shaped key with a different number on it, and a different clerk smiles at us from behind the desk and says 'Good-morning' and 'Good-evening' to us, according to the time of day."

"And what particular star do you follow?" Maxwell asked.

"What star?" Miss Martin laughed to herself. "Oh, we've followed a lot of different stars. But the 'Social Doings' column in the *Herald* and Galignani's is our chief guide. But I'm afraid this is not very interesting, and I really do not see why I should tell you all about myself, except that I seem to have a quite unusual desire to start fair with you."

"On the contrary," Maxwell said, "I find you most interesting."

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Miss Martin looked up at him as if she were rather surprised.

"Yes!" she said. "Would you believe it, I have been told that often before, but never, I believe, for talking about myself. Men generally like to hear about themselves."

"But I am a very commonplace person," said Maxwell. "There is nothing to discuss."

"So am I commonplace," she said—"over here. You don't know the type in America. It must necessarily be transplanted. It is quite an unnatural growth. You see, I know a great deal more than you do about many things, and yet I am still very young."

"And yet," he said, "there are many things I think which you have perhaps neglected."

"Many things?" she repeated. "Pretty much everything that is worth the while. There is a whole world that I know nothing of at all. The world I don't know lives behind stone walls, and

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I can batter my head against them and tear my hands until they bleed, but I can never get behind them. If you had only driven as I have, all through the country roads of France and Italy and Germany, and found nothing but walls and hedges on either side of you! There is never a dog that barks at me from a villa gate that I don't envy. You see he can go on both sides of the stone walls and the hedges. I can't."

The girl pressed her fingers into the palms of her hands and closed her lips tightly.

"I'm a fool," she went on, angrily, "to talk to you like that. I don't know why I should unless it's because you belong to the other side of the hedge. Besides, what is there for me to talk to you about? You don't know or care about the people I know. If you made love to me the way these fools do about here, I wouldn't talk to you as I have. I'd know how to treat you and make you love me." Miss Martin looked at him

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sharply. "Perhaps you don't think I can make men love me? You just sit there and stare at me and don't say anything, and—and I wish you wouldn't." Miss Martin suddenly jerked her handkerchief out of her pocket. "My nose is red and this wind makes me cry, and I'm going back. Wait till you see me at dinner."

Miss Martin prodded the driver violently with her parasol, and told him to return to Monaco.

"I didn't notice your nose was red," said Maxwell, "and I don't want to go back to that gambling dive, and I was very much interested in what you were saying."

"Well, now," she answered, "as you know the story of my life, we'll talk about those yachts out there, and why the water should be so green near land and purple further out, and I will smile at you all the time. And better people than an occasional American tourist have come a long way to see me smile."

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And although they decided to go on to Cap Martin, they did talk about the yachts and the color of the water, and the girl smiled so successfully that both of them were laughing when in the gray of the evening they drove back through the little streets of Monaco.

The dinner that night at the Hotel de Paris was the first of a series of dinners and breakfasts that lasted for two weeks, of which Mrs. Carew, her daughter and Maxwell formed the nucleus. Sometimes Robertson and Cortright made up the party, sometimes other friends of Mrs. Carew. They generally dined at Monte Carlo, but for their lunch drove to Cap Martin or Mentone or London House at Nice. For Maxwell these were very bright, happy days, full of the keenest pleasure and excitement. Not that his love for the tables grew, or that he ever entered fully into the reckless life which seems to be almost the only possible one at Monte Carlo. He found his pleasure in a life which constantly threw

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him with this girl whom he had but just met—who, in two short weeks, had interested him more than any woman he had yet known. It seemed to be tacitly understood by Mrs. Carew and her friends that Miss Martin and Maxwell were to be thrown together as much as the hours of the day and the rather elastic rules of the place would permit. They sat by each other at breakfast, they drove side by side in the late afternoon, and dinner again found them together. They seldom went to “the rooms,” and then it was only to accompany their friends. Neither of them played, and their amusement was in each other’s interest in the gains and the losses of others. But they never stayed in the Casino very long. One or the other would complain of the heat or the crowd, and then they would walk out on the terrace or through the gardens, or down into the little town or up the hill about the castle, where no one is allowed to gamble, and where they found nothing but smiling faces and the

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little houses as bright and polished as a housewife's in Holland.

It was two weeks after Maxwell had arrived when Cortright found Robertson, one warm afternoon, sitting on the balustrade of the terrace, looking gloomily up toward the bulging cupolas of the Casino.

"What's the matter?" asked Cortright. "Didn't you enjoy your breakfast? I thought your divinity, Miss Martin, particularly beautiful."

"Did you see the way she looked at Maxwell?" said Robertson.

"Not more than usual. Why, are you jealous?"

"Jealous, no. Did you ever happen to say anything to Mrs. Carew about Maxwell?"

"No," mused Cortright. "If she wanted to throw her girl at a poor man's head, it was none of my business. I must say I was surprised, weren't you?"

"I don't know that I was," said Robertson, slowly. "Look here, old man,

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I've made a mess of this whole thing, and I want you to help me out of it. When Maxwell first came here I understood he was to stay only a day or two, and as he seemed to like the looks of Miss Martin, I told the mother that he was immensely rich, and a lot of rubbish of that sort. 'Pon my soul, I did it for the best. I thought I would give him a good time. How could I know he would stay here and fall in love with the girl?"

"And what have I got to do with it?" asked Cortright.

"Well, somebody must tell Mrs. Carew the truth, so that she can call her daughter off before there is any harm done. You know, I think the girl really likes him."

"Well?" asked Cortright.

"Well," repeated Robertson. "I can't tell her. It wouldn't be safe. She seems to like you pretty well. I thought you might break the news to her very gently. She said she wanted to drive

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this afternoon. Take her over to Nice. I'll pay for the carriage."

Cortright remained silent for some time, and then looked at Robertson and shook his head dismally. "It's a bad business," he said, "but I'll do it. She'd kill you, and you're too necessary to my happiness to die yet;" and he slid off the balustrade and started slowly up the terrace.

"I say," called Robertson, "I wouldn't tell her until I got her into French territory. In case she does do you any real injury, you can get some justice over there. I don't put any faith in these Monaco laws."

Several hours later Miss Martin and Maxwell found Robertson still seated on the balustrade. It was twilight, and the terrace was quite deserted.

"Are you still together?" he asked, gloomily. "I wonder if your mother drove to Nice this afternoon?"

Miss Martin said that she had.

"Well—don't let me keep you. En-

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joy yourselves while you may. I'm going to see if I can win the price of a carriage drive."

Miss Martin and Maxwell wished him luck, and went on their way to the far end of the terrace. From where they stood they could see the lights just beginning to twinkle on the yachts lying away below them in the little bay, and beyond the long chain of street lights winding its way up the old road to the town and the great castle on the hill.

"You are very quiet," she said.
"What were you thinking of?"

"I was thinking," he answered,
"what I should do if I were Prince of Monaco."

"Yes! And what would you do? Have a yacht and go deep-sea fishing, like the present Prince?"

"Yes, I should have a yacht, but I should fish for very large game. I should begin my operations very late at night, after I had put the Princess to bed, because, you see, as I am royal, I

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should have been unfortunately married in my early youth. Then, accompanied by a few trusty slaves, I would come to the Hotel de Paris, and having previously discovered the location of your room, I would scale the walls and carry you away to the yacht."

"But why not send up for me by the night porter?" she said.

"Well, you see," he answered, "ruling monarchs cannot very well take night porters into their confidence, can they?"

"It seems to me," she said, "you are rather looking for trouble. Why don't you have a yacht of your own? Or perhaps you have one?"

"I have a catboat," he said.

"Where? On the Hudson?"

"No, in New Jersey, where I live."

"But I thought," she said, "you had a place near Yonkers—Maxwell's Crossing?"

"No," he answered. "I never heard of such a place. We've always lived in

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Jersey, and the only thing ever named after us was a street they cut through our farm. It's a nice old place, though very simple, but I'm sure you would like it."

The girl looked at him curiously, as if in some doubt that he were really telling the truth.

"You live there always?" she asked.

"Yes. I go to town every day to the office, but I don't count the day really begun until I get back to the place. Some day," he went on, "if I can't be Prince of Monaco, I hope to save enough money to stop work when I'm about forty, and give up the city altogether. Don't you think that would be fine? To wake up every morning and know that you didn't have to see a railroad car, or a desk, or an elevated all day. Nothing but trees and the river; and your greatest difficulties would be to rig the cat-boat or lay out a golf course. That's living—that is!"

"I'm afraid I must be going home,"

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said Miss Martin. "It is getting late, and I'm dining out."

They walked slowly and quite silently along the terrace.

"Must you go home at once?" he asked. "Won't you stop for a moment at our arbor? It's really not so very late."

"Very well," she said, after a moment's hesitation. For some unknown reason she felt that it might be the last time that they would be together, and so they turned from the terrace into the heavy foliage of the garden. They walked down the hill and went into the little summer-house. One of the gardeners had fallen asleep on a neighboring bank, but otherwise they were quite alone. The two sat on the rustic bench, and Maxwell lighted a cigarette.

"I beg your pardon," he said, "won't you smoke?" And he offered her his case.

For a moment the girl hesitated. "No, thank you," she said.

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"But you do smoke?"

"Sometimes," she answered, "when I have to. I don't like it."

"And when do you have to?" he asked.

"Oh," said the girl, "at certain times, when I think it makes me more—more attractive. You might as well ask why the typewriter plays on a typewriting machine all day in the hotel corridor, when there is a grand piano in the drawing-room."

"But the typewriter, in a way, is a servant," said Maxwell. "You at least are independent; you have no master."

"No," she said. "I have no master; that is where the typewriter has the best of me. I am looking for one." Miss Martin glanced curiously up into Maxwell's face and smiled. "You think that is a strange thing for a girl to say, don't you? Not very nice, perhaps; certainly very stupid. So it is, but quite true—absolutely true." Miss Martin laughed and looked out toward the sea.

"I don't suppose," said Maxwell, "it

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is the highest idea of matrimony. But then our ideas in America are quite different from those of the continent. Aren't they? We marry for love, and do our own proposing, and all that sort of thing. It has its advantages, even if we forget the financial difficulties of the future sometimes. But then we have no one to blame but ourselves, after all. What does a marriage mean to you, for instance?"

"Well, to me it means first the necessities of life; after that all that the other woman leaves me."

"The other woman?" interrupted Maxwell.

"Yes."

Miss Martin looked up at him as if in doubt as to whether she should go on.

"You see women of a certain kind naturally marry a certain class of men. They marry us because we have money or position, or because they have formed a mesalliance, and we are picked out to reform them. Now, there is only really

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one reason why a man should marry me—to get rid of somebody else. So the family make me a proposal and the other one a proposition, and if we all agree—well, then we fix the day.”

“And then?”

“And then? Oh, then he says good-bye slowly to the other one, and I buy some new clothes, and then—then we get married.”

Maxwell dropped his cigarette and twisted it with his heel into the gravel. “Something of a pity,” he said, “don’t you think? Or am I altogether too old-fashioned?”

The girl looked at him for some moments, and then put out her hand to him. “I’m very sorry,” she said. “It’s not like me to say that sort of thing. I’m not really so bad as you believe. It’s been so long since I’ve met a man like you. You are a bit old-fashioned, but you’re clean. The type is quite extinct over here.”

She turned from him for a moment,

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and when she looked back she was smiling, and her manner and figure had become quite erect again.

"You are really refreshing, you know," she said laughingly. "You make me quite forget myself. I haven't been natural for such a very long time."

"And now," said Maxwell, "are you yourself, or have you begun another part?"

"Now?" she said. "Oh, now I think I shall act again. It will make me enjoy my vacations of naturalness so much the more."

"Why do you act at all?" he asked, gravely.

"Why, why do I act? Because here we all act. We all play to be something we are not. Did you ever notice the people any night at the big restaurants? Look at the women. How smart they are, and how dignified and horribly respectable. And yet every chasseur—every man in the band knows they're not. Have you noticed the men? How

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they strut to their tables! They wear monocles and strange jewelry and embroidered shirt-fronts to give them an air of individuality, and they pay their *additions* in notes, even if they are under a louis and their pockets full of gold. And who are these poseurs? Did you ever hear of a member of their family or of a single relation? To-day they are dressed in fine clothes and living on the fat of the land. To-morrow they will give you a tip on a French race-course and God's blessing for a five-franc piece."

"And Robertson and Cortright? Are they acting, too?"

"They are not so bad. Their combined incomes don't amount to twenty thousand francs a year, and they spend more than that much a week. It is not exactly a natural life, is it?"

"You mean they are gamblers?"

Miss Martin pursed her lips, and then her features slowly relaxed into a smile. "No, I shouldn't say that. There is something rather dishonest about the

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word gamblers, I think. They are gentlemen who know how to play their money. That's all. They would take your fortune as mercilessly as the bank in the Casino, but they would never cheat you."

Maxwell took a cigarette from his case and lighted it. Then he watched the match burn until the flame had touched his fingers.

"And—and you?" he said slowly. "What part do you play?"

The girl turned her eyes full into his own. As quickly she turned from him, but he noticed that her cheeks had turned quite crimson.

"Forgive me," he begged. "I wouldn't have hurt you for the world. I was only jesting, believe me, I——"

Miss Martin turned her face to him slowly. The color had gone, but in her eyes there was a look of infinite weariness. It told him that she was hopelessly tired of the life she had just spoken of, tired of herself, of him.

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Now, at least, he knew that she was not acting.

"No," she said, "you are quite right. I am playing my little part, too. If we live here, we must all act. It is necessary to the place. That sea isn't like a real sea, is it? Look how unnaturally blue and green and saffron it is. It's like a highly-colored photograph. And the sky, see how purple it is, and look at the palms. They look as if they grew in the heart of the tropics, but they don't. They are brought here on freight cars and made to bloom in earthen pots. And do you hear those doves? Perhaps you think they are fluttering about in the trees and calling to their mates on the grass below. They're not. They are only stage doves, locked in a little cage, and are calling to be free. But we don't know that. We only know that it is very beautiful, and that it is all made very easy for us here. If, for instance," the girl laughed aloud, "if you wanted to tell me that you loved me, you would

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bring me here. Yes, you would; among the plants and in the hearing of the doves. You would forget the earthen pots and the wire cages. You would see nothing but beautiful flowers and spreading palms and hear the singing of the birds. It would be so easy for you. I say it is made so easy for us here in this foul place, so easy for you and for me, and even for the man who gropes his way out of the rooms and down the hill to this little spot among the trees. It is so easy to end it all here in a bed of flowers, with the birds chirping about him. You see he carries the best of life to the very end. It fills his eyes, his ears and his nostrils. I tell you, we live on ozone here. We are awakened at ten o'clock by Hungarian love-tunes, and we drink champagne at twelve. And at night more Tziganes and we hide ourselves under red lamp shades. Imagine some night if the sunshine should break in upon the diners at the Grand Hotel. What a sacrifice of human

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beauty! The judgment day of rouge and powder and bleached hair. It's awful to think of."

She rose and stepped to the door of the arbor. For a moment she leaned against the door frame, her head resting against the back of her hand. "I'm afraid you find me very tiring," she said. "I've not said so much to any one for months. I've railed against it all to the sea and to the rocks, but I've never dared say all I thought to any one here. They wouldn't understand me. But you do."

She turned to him suddenly, holding herself very erect, every line of her face and figure standing out sharply against the dark foliage. Her voice had become very high and had an unnaturally strident tone in it.

"You must understand," she said. "You are fresh from a clean country. You have come from friends untainted by years of this life. If you only knew us! If you could see us as we are!"

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Maxwell in one step was at her side. He took her hand in both of his.

"Then," he said, "knowing it as you do, why don't you leave it and go back to your home and your own people?"

The girl's form relaxed, and for a moment she leaned heavily against the wall of the arbor. She shook her head and smiled up at him wearily.

"Go home!" she repeated. "I have no home. We haven't had one for years. But some day we shall. Yes, some day when I marry. Oh, yes, we are to have a home some day."

The girl pressed the palms of her hands heavily against her temples. For some moments she stood thus and then, as if with a great effort, she collected her thoughts and smiled up at him.

"I wonder what I've been saying! Such a lot of nonsense. Don't mind me. I'm afraid I'm not quite well."

Maxwell, still holding her hand in his, put his free arm about her, and for a few moments she leaned against him.

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And then she slowly drew herself from him, and, turning, freed him, and as if she had just awakened from a long sleep looked into his face curiously, as if it had been for the first time.

"Alice," he said, "speak to me. You are not very ill?"

In answer she tried feebly to smile, and raising his hand, in which he still held hers, lightly touched it with her lips.

"You are such a good boy," she said, "such a good boy to me. You will forget. Promise me you will forget all the foolish things I have said to-day."

"I will forget them, Alice, on one condition," he said. "That you will help me. Tell me that you will leave this place with me, and I will take you back to our own country, and to our own home. It's not so good perhaps as I ought to offer you, but you don't know how fresh and clean and pure it all is. Won't you promise me, Alice?"

He tried to put his arm about the girl, but she motioned him back.

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"You don't know," she said; "you don't know."

"I know everything, I love you," he said. "When will you give me your answer—now or to-morrow?"

The girl looked up into his eyes and bowed her head.

"To-morrow," she said.

* * *

Miss Martin dined that evening with some friends at the Grand, and went on with them later to the Casino. But she was tired, and out of sympathy with her host and her host's friends, and so she made the overheated rooms an excuse for leaving them, and asked one of the men to take her back to her hotel. As she entered the salon she found Mrs. Carew standing in front of the fireplace, holding a telegram in her hand. She noticed that her mother looked very tired. There were heavy rings under her eyes and the lines in her face seemed deeper and graver than usual. She crossed the room, and dropping her

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cloak fell into an armchair and began pulling at her gloves.

"You look tired, mother," she said. "No bad news, I hope?"

Mrs. Carew began to smooth out the telegram carefully between her hands. "No," she said; "no bad news in the telegram. I had it sent."

"You had it sent?"

"Yes; I wired Clarham to send me a telegram in Brown, Shipley's name saying my quarterly remittance had not come. You needn't look surprised. It's a harmless old game. You've helped me with it before this."

"But—but," said the girl, "do we need money so badly now? I thought we were rather in funds. You told me you won a great deal yesterday, and the day before, too."

Mrs. Carew folded the telegram with much precision, and laid it on the table in the center of the room.

"My dear," she said, "I'm afraid you don't exactly understand the condition

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of affairs. As you say, I am not in actual need of ready money, but it seems there has been a mistake—a very serious mistake. If I were not the most patient and best humored woman in the world I should have broken every piece of furniture in this room over that Robertson's lying head."

Miss Martin nestled deeper into the cushions of her armchair and raised her hand to her face to hide a half-stifed yawn. Mrs. Carew meanwhile took a cigarette from her case and lighted it with much deliberation.

"You were saying something, I think," said the girl, "about Robertson's lying head?"

"It seems," said Mrs. Carew, "that your young friend Maxwell is an impostor."

Miss Martin half rose from her chair and looked keenly into her mother's face, but the latter for some reason seemed to avoid her daughter's eyes.

"What did you say?" asked the girl.

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"I said that Maxwell was an impostor. It may not have been his fault. I can't say positively. That story of Robertson's about his being rich, Maxwell's Crossing, and all that rubbish, is a lie, a deliberate lie to deceive me. For ten days we've wasted our time and spent our good money on a Cook's tourist because we thought he was a millionaire. I'm very sorry for you, my dear, very sorry. I really had begun to think you had actually caught him."

Mrs. Carew sighed wearily and cast a quick glance at her daughter to note the effect of her disclosures. Miss Martin dropped back into the chair.

"Who told you all this?" she asked.

"Cortright. I drove over toward Nice with him this afternoon."

"And Maxwell," said the girl, "what did he know of this?"

"Cortright says he knew nothing. I don't believe it. They were all in the game, I believe. May the dinners and suppers I gave them do them good! I

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can get even with the boy, but with Robertson it's another matter."

Miss Martin turned her head toward her mother.

"You said you could get even with the boy. Just what do you mean?"

"What do I mean? Do you think I am going to allow a boy like that to amuse himself at my expense? To eat my dinners, to waste my time, to keep away other men from you, and then tell me he is no millionaire, but a miserable pauper? He is going to pay, and pay well for his sport if I can make him, and I think I can."

The mother took up the telegram that she had laid on the table and shook it at her daughter. Her features broke suddenly into an unpleasant smile, and she laughed softly to herself.

"The fool is in love with you, my dear. Your simplicity and your trusting smile. He told me as much himself. He said he didn't know how a girl could lead such a life among such

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people and remain untainted. Do you hear what I am saying, my little untainted one? Bah! I hate a fool!"

Mrs. Carew tossed her cigarette into the hearth.

"I told him to come here at eleven," she added.

Miss Martin remained for some moments, her head resting among the pillows. It was quite still in the room, save for the crackling pine knots on the hearth and the ticking of the clock above it. And then from across the piazza the bell in the Casino tower struck eleven times, and the little clock on the hearth chimed back a faint echo.

"You understand what you are to do," said Mrs. Carew. "You needn't advance any opinions of your own. Simply back up in a general way anything I say about our quarterly remittances not having been received in London, and that a certain amount of ready money is necessary. You might say we had to pay for that diamond star Bouch-

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eron sent you yesterday. You understand?"

"Yes," said the girl, wearily; "I understand."

She got up and crossed the room to the window. She looked out on the brightly-lit square, at the lights of the café and the little tables, each with its circle of merry-makers about it, and then up at the illuminated face of the great clock. The minute hand had already passed the hour by several minutes. She turned suddenly and faced her mother.

"Yes," she said, "I understand what you mean, and I refuse to help you."

Mrs. Carew glanced up and eyed her daughter narrowly.

"You refuse?" she said. "And why?"

"I refuse," said the girl, "because I don't want to rob a man I like."

"'Rob,'" said the woman, slowly, "is a strong word, and 'like,' in this case I think a weak one. Do you know I al-

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most feared this? That is why I have been so calm. I am sorry to hear this outbreak. We had better cut it short. We need the money. If you refuse to help me, go to your room, or—or where you please."

"Mother," said the girl, "I have done a good deal of this sort of thing for you. I have lied. I believe you told me that as a child I had stolen for you. I think you may say I have been in all things an obedient daughter, but this time I am going to fail you. I am not going to leave the room, and I am going to see that you do not take any money from this man."

The girl crossed the room and placed her hands on her mother's shoulders.

"Mother, do you hear me?" she said.

Mrs. Carew glanced up, and the two women stood for some moments each looking directly into the eyes of the other. The stillness was broken by a soft tapping at the door.

"You have very hard hands," said

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the mother, "besides, you are rumpling my lace."

For one brief moment the girl's fingers tightened and pressed deep into the soft flesh of Mrs. Carew's arms. "This time," said the girl, "I say you will fail."

Then her arms dropped to her side, and she crossed the room and took the place she had left at the window.

Mrs. Carew turned to the mirror and arranged the lace over her shoulders. "Come in," she called.

Young Maxwell opened the door, and for a moment hesitated on the threshold.

"Come in, do," said Mrs. Carew, stretching out her hands to him. "Forgive me for sending for you, but it was most important that I should see you to-night. Sit down, please."

Maxwell found a chair by the table, while Mrs. Carew took the telegram up and apparently read it with much care.

"It is very embarrassing," she said, smiling, "but I have a great favor to

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ask of you. I know that we have no claim upon you, my daughter and myself." Mrs. Carew turned and smiled in the direction of Miss Martin. "May I first ask you to look at this telegram I have just received from my bankers in London?"

Mrs. Carew handed him the despatch, but before he had opened it Miss Martin had crossed the room and taken the piece of paper out of his hands.

"Mr. Maxwell," she said, "my mother has made a mistake. We have no favor to ask of you." She held out her hand to him. "Good-night, and thank you very much for coming."

Maxwell looked at the outstretched hand and then into the big, earnest eyes of the girl standing before him.

"Go," she said, "please go, for my sake."

He looked toward Mrs. Carew, but she was looking into the fire, her back toward him.

"Mrs. Carew," he began.

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At the mention of her name she turned her head slowly toward him.

"Mr. Maxwell," she said, "my daughter is much distressed at the cause which made your visit necessary. We are sorely in need of ready money. She does not appreciate how great the need is, and she naturally has some hesitation."

The girl stood leaning heavily with one hand upon the table. "That is not true," she said. "You have asked Mr. Maxwell here to borrow money we do not need and which you may never return. He shall not be robbed, as I have seen you rob others."

Mrs. Carew crossed the room to where her daughter stood and peered narrowly into her face.

"Do you mean to say——" she began.

"What difference, mother," said the girl, impatiently, "what I do mean? Mr. Maxwell is going to leave us now. We shall never see him again, and he will forget us and this miserable scene here.

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Won't you, Mr. Maxwell?" The girl stretched out her hand to him. "You'll promise me that, surely?"

"Yes," he said; "I will promise you that, but not to leave you. You are not going to ask me to do that?"

The girl looked for a moment into his eyes, and then in answer bowed her head.

"But only to-day, Alice, this afternoon, you almost promised——"

"This afternoon," she repeated. The girl looked up into his face and smiled. "This afternoon. You didn't know us then. I had a foolish idea you might never really understand exactly what we were."

"I knew everything then that I know now," he said.

"And yet," she answered, "yet you would come here and ask me——" The girl looked him full in the face, and shook her head. "What an infinite faith!" she said.

"Yes," he answered; "I have faith.

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Faith in you. And that is why I want to take you away from all this."

Mrs. Carew had returned to the hearth, and stood looking into the fire, apparently unconscious of the presence of her daughter and Maxwell or of what they said, but at his last words she turned suddenly upon him.

"Take her away," she repeated, "take her away? Take my girl? Where?"

"To our home," said Maxwell. "It may lack some of the luxuries she has known with you, but I think I can promise her much that will take their place. To be candid, Mrs. Carew, I don't think much of the world in which you live for a girl, and I believe if Alice could see something of another one, a better and a cleaner one she would see it as I do. You are a woman of the world. No one knows better than yourself how much above all this your daughter is. I can't offer her much. But, good God! it's better than this. She's a girl. She's more; she's your own daughter. Give

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her one chance to know something better than this vile place."

Maxwell stood in the center of the room, looking very tall and fine and strong, and in his manner he showed that he was not to be denied. Both the women knew that they were in the presence of a personality stronger than they had ever known.

As he finished speaking, he walked to where the girl was standing and put his arm about her. But she seemed quite unconscious of his presence. Her eyes were fixed on her mother. Mrs. Carew had been called a well-preserved woman, but in the last few minutes the preservation of years seemed to be breaking up and crumbling away as the new possibilities of the future came before her. Even in the dim red light of the dying fire the lines about her eyes and her mouth seemed to straighten and deepen perceptibly and her rounded cheeks to lose their firmness, to become flabby and fall in folds about her jaws. The fires

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of spirit and anger which had always lighted her eyes suddenly died out, and there she remained for her last stand, inanimate and gray as the dead ashes on the hearth at her feet. She raised her hand to the shelf over the fireplace and groped along it in search of her cigarette case, but when she found it and raised it slightly it was only to let it fall heavily on the floor. The spirit of bravado had gone out of her. She felt it die as she saw the light of a new life and of the first real love come into her daughter's eyes.

For a moment she looked impassively at the two figures standing in front of her, their arms about each other as if for their mutual protection. The lack of defiance, almost fear in their attitude seemed to give her a new strength, and she drew herself erect and for a moment stared questioningly into the eyes of her daughter. But it was only for a moment. Then she glanced curiously about the room, as if she were not quite con-

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vinced as to her surroundings, then half fell into a deep easy-chair facing the fire.

"You said just now," she said, slowly, "that I should give my daughter one chance. It seems to me that I have been a pretty good mother. When that girl left her father of her own choice to come to me I owned only the poor clothes I had on my back and I begged for my next meal." Mrs. Carew cast a glance about the room with its rich hangings and all its modern luxury, and shrugged her shoulders. "I don't think I have done so badly by her. I suppose you would have had me put her on a farm while I earned a few dollars a week as a chambermaid in a city boarding-house. Well, I did pretty much everything except that, but I always aimed high. It was *I* who kept the boarding-house. Yes, a fashionable West Side boarding-house, and Alice used to come into the parlor at night and dance for the guests. She was very tall and lanky then, and I used to dress her in pink tulle, and after

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she had danced she would talk to the guests, and they would give her some money. Her face was very beautiful, even then. Did you ever hear of 'La Petite Mimosa'? She used to dance in the variety theatres fifteen years ago. That was Alice." Mrs. Carew smiled. "It is just as well you should know something about her before you take her home to your mother and your sisters. But I got her off the stage and out of the boarding-house business, and then we came to the Continent. I worked very hard for her. I sent her to a good school in Brussels, and when she came back to me she was the most beautiful creature I ever saw. I said: we will marry you to a prince, and I tried to marry her to a prince. I took her from city to city. Wherever there was a chance to marry her well I took her. Yes, she was for sale to the highest bidder, if you will; but they didn't bid high enough, not nearly high enough for my Alice. There was a Roman marquis—"

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Mrs. Carew smoothed back her hair with both hands and remained silent for some time. "Why, my Alice ought to have married an earl, but she always was a prig, the little fool. Bah! I hate a fool."

The girl went to her mother's chair and knelt by her side.

"Mother," she said, "don't be hard on me."

"Hard on you," the woman replied; "I'm not hard on you. Don't you see you can't marry a man like that? You were fitted to marry into a big world, not into an American village. Good heavens! I tried that game twenty years ago."

"And when you left it," interrupted Maxwell, "all your troubles began, if I am to believe your own story."

Mrs. Carew smiled and shrugged her shoulders.

"I'm tired of this," she said, rising to her feet. "Besides, you are becoming rather impertinent. If you want to talk to me, come to-morrow."

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"And your daughter?" he asked.

"Alice? She does as I tell her. Can't you understand how impossible you are, and how impossible she is for your life? She has been trained to marry into a world where pasts are not spoken of. Can't you understand that she cannot marry and settle among people who will search into our every past act and drag it out and show it to all the world? It would mean misery for her—for both of you. What would your people think of a girl who had led the life she has, a dancer in low theatres, both of us so poor that we sometimes begged for our next meal. Her friends were women——"

The girl walked to where her mother stood, and putting both her hands on her shoulders, looked directly into her eyes.

"Mother," she said, "you have told Mr. Maxwell many things about me. But there is one thing you have not yet told him. That is—" the girl used her words very slowly and with much precision, "you have not told him that I am

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a good woman. You must tell him that now, before he leaves us."

The woman looked away from her daughter for a moment, and then back into her eyes.

"Yes," she said. "You are a good woman."

"Thank you, mother," said the girl, and then, turning to Maxwell, "you may go now."

"But you will go with me? I will take you over to Lady Margaret's now, and to-morrow we will go with her to London."

The girl took a step toward him.

"If you do," said the mother, "you must leave me and the home I have made for you. Now and for always. You must choose between us."

Miss Martin for a moment hesitated.

Then with both hands she reached out and took the hand that Maxwell had stretched out to her. He put his arm about her, but the girl released herself and started to go to her mother.

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"Mother," she said, "you will forgive me?"

But the woman motioned her away, and then put her hands up to her face, so that she did not see Maxwell lead her daughter away out of the room and out of her life forever.

Cortright and Robertson met at the door of the Casino after the rooms had closed that night, and instead of following the crowd down the hill to Monaco or across the piazza to the cafés, they strolled behind the theatre to the terrace. The sea lay, a great broad band of purple, and save for a fine line of tiny silver crests that beat monotonously against the rocks, as motionless and quiet as the starred sky above it. In the harbor the long slender hulls of the yachts showed gray and phantomlike in the starlight. Their naked spars seemed to reach to absurdly great heights, and the deck lights shone out like dotted lines of gold across a blackboard.

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The two men leaned on the balustrade and looked for some moments out over the dark waters. The crowd had vanished, and barring the few lights that came from the upper windows of the casino, they seemed to be very far away from all mankind.

"It's wonderful," said Cortright, under his breath.

"Wonderful!"

"It always seemed to me," said Cortright, "that the Creator put His best work into this place when He made the world, and then went away and never came back."

Robertson looked up at his friend seriously, and then out again at the undulating sea.

"Yes?" he said. "Well, I don't know what I agree with you. I had a good many fine ideas when I was a kid, and we had them all pretty much knocked out of me, and I guess this place has been about as effective in doing it as all the rest put together. But there are a

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few notions I like to hold on to yet, one of them is that the Creator has lost His grip even on this damned planet. How can men like you or me know anything about it? He may be here next week or to-morrow or to-night one way or another, for all we know.

"That's so," said Cortright. "In any way or another. I'm going to see the Austrian girl dance at the 'Riche.' Come along?"

**A FREAK'S MIDSUMMER
NIGHT'S DREAM**

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A FREAK'S MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

R. Colter Pullen put his feet on his desk, lighted a cigar, and swept a pile of letters off the morning paper. First he found the amusement column and read the advertisements of the two dime museums of which he was the manager and sole proprietor, and then ran his eye down the list of steamboat excursions, any one of which would carry him far beyond the petty annoyances and bad odors of the baked city.

"Summer seasons may suit freaks and assistant managers, but personally I think I prefer the breezes of Manhattan Beach," he murmured to himself, as he tried to straighten his fast-declining collar. "Carter," he called to his assistant, "I'm going to run down to the

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shore for a bath. How about that girl with the three feet?"

"Fake," said Carter, "pure fake. I wouldn't show her in a one-night-stand circus side-show."

"That's bad," mused the sole proprietor. "We need some new people next week, sure. The public don't seem to take to our lady wood-sawing contest. Run your eye over this mail."

Carter did as he was told, and dropped the letters slowly one by one into the waste-paper basket until he came to the last one.

"This sounds promising," he said. "Here's a letter from Keogh, of the Columbus Music-Hall. Says he has been showing a strong man, a snake-charmer, and a living skeleton, and all of them want to get a New York opening."

Pullen took the letter and read it half aloud.

"Dear Pullen," it ran, "the hot weather has closed me up, and I have a contract with three Al freaks I wish you would take off my hands:

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Walters, the strong man; Maobi, a snake-charmer, with six rattlesnakes, a Gila monster, and a great wardrobe; and Hobart Peckham, a winner in the skeleton line. Had him examined by physicians, and they say he is a wonder. One of the very few in the business traveling without an assistant. Let you have the three for thirty a week for two weeks. If satisfactory, wire or write at once.

Signed, HENRY KEOGH."

"They're cheap enough," said Pullen. "Write him to send them along, and send them the address of that Meggs woman's boarding-house on East Fifth street. The fare isn't calculated to build up a Samson, but it'll suit the skeleton down to the ground. You'd better get out the paper to-day, and try and work up a physical examination of the skeleton by some good hospital. If it will make you any cooler," and here Mr. Pullen pulled out a large gold watch, "you can think of me just two hours and a half from now, taking a plunge into a cold, frothy breaker."

Mr. Carter glanced wearily at the

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clock, and began to write an advertisement concerning the unequalled transparencies of the skeleton, the superhuman strength of the strong man, and the snake-charmer's beauty—a beauty which was capable of rendering useless the fangs of six rattlesnakes and a Gila monster.

Hobart Peckham, the skeleton, was a freak of but three weeks' standing, and had gone directly from his home in an obscure Ohio town to the Columbus freak-hall. To stand on a red-baize platform and be the subject of a five-minute lecture every half-hour was not the life he would have chosen, if nature had fitted him for anything else. But the muscular atrophy which had gradually shriveled up his frame had left him without the power to work, and the salary offered him by the Columbus manager was, in his eyes, a very munificent one. At his home he had left nothing but a little house painted white, with green shutters. His people were

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resting under a couple of cheap marble slabs up on the hill back of the house. In a few years, the skeleton argued, he could save enough to go back to the little village and live in peace and quiet until the time should come for him to join his people. For many years he had read of New York; and when it had been settled that he was to visit it professionally, he had been the recipient of most sincere congratulations from every other freak in Keogh's Hall.

"Columbus is a one-night stand compared to it," said the skeleton's particular friend, Abe Lovell, the man without arms and legs, and who earned twenty-five dollars a week by cutting out wooden anchors and Masonic scrolls with the assistance of a penknife and two appendages where the arms should have been. "I ought to know, for I was there twice. I tell you, the money flows in like water through a canal gate. I had more orders than I could begin to fill, and had to have more than half of

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them done by a carpenter who lived in an alley near the hall. I tell you it's great graft for skeletons, is New York. Billy Ratcliffe, the best skeleton in the profession, eighteen inches around the chest, showed there the same time I did. Used to get offers of marriage every day from some of the best society ladies in the city. And as a picture-seller he was in his own class. Charged twenty cents, and sold an average of thirty a day. Poor Billy, he was a great favorite with the ladies, but he never cared for but the one that killed him.

"Killed him?" said the skeleton.

"Sure," said the legless man. "Died of a broken heart. She was a fine blonde, too. He met her from the platform, and married her a week later at her home in Harlem. They were very happy for a time, and then she took up with a ticket-chopper on the elevated road, and Ratcliffe pined away and died. She certainly did treat him rough. You see, Billy couldn't walk by himself, as

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his legs weren't big enough to carry him; so, when the ticket-chopper had finished his work he would come under the window and whistle, and the blonde woman would lift Billy out of his chair and lay him on his back on the floor while she went out. Billy used to lie there on his back, for all the world like a turtle, and kick and hollow for help; but the neighbors got used to it, and never gave him no heed. And the worst of it was," continued the dismembered freak, "the blonde and the ticket-chopper got fifteen hundred dollars bones money."

"Bones money?" asked the skeleton.

"Don't you know what bones money is?" asked the legless freak, in a disheartened tone. "Well, you are new in the business. Skeletons always sell their bones to a hospital before they die. Sometimes they leave it to their children, and sometimes they get an advance to enjoy a bit of the fun themselves."

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It took some time for the skeleton to appreciate this condition of affairs.

"I'll never do that," he said; "it's bad enough to make a show of yourself on the platform, but I like to feel as if I had some claim on myself. I'd mortgage the farm sooner than my bones."

"That's the way you feel now; but wait till you marry and can't get even a tornado insurance company to put a cent on your frizzled self; then you'll be glad enough to fix it up with a hospital, won't you?"

The skeleton evaded the question by returning to the first topic of the conversation.

"Judging from Ratcliffe's case, it must be a poor town for marrying, I guess."

"Personally, I always believed in marrying in the profession," said the woodcutter. "That means double salary and a certain oneness of tastes and hours. If you're thinking of matrimony, what is the matter with the snake-charmer over there? Good-looking, trim figure, worth

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forty dollars a week outside of photographs, and added to all that is the speculative element. You never know whether one of those scaly pets of hers won't sting her during the next five minutes."

Unnoticed by his friend, the skeleton became peculiarly conscious, and a light-pink flush gradually rose up from under his collar and diffused itself over his tightly drawn yellow face.

"To hear you talk," he said, "makes me wish almost I hadn't been born a freak."

"Like unto like," said the wood-cutter. "Hand me that endless chain. But if you do get into that game, keep your eye on the strong man. Jim Walters is as much a faker as the iron balls he juggles with, but the girls get fascinated with his figure."

At this point the gong rang, the skeleton slid off his friend's platform, and a few minutes later, as he thrust photographs of his emaciated self before the

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eyes of curious strangers, he looked on the big frame of the strong man and cursed the God who had made him what he was.

The rain was falling in large warm drops on the following Monday morning, when the three freaks from the Western town alighted at the foot of Cortlandt street and inquired the way to Mrs. Meggs' boarding-house in East Fifth street. The finances of the trio were at a very low ebb, and it was quickly agreed, as the three stood huddled together under the big shed, that they should walk to their destination. Hence the snake-charmer, in a gossamer, leaning on the arm of the modern Hercules in a tweed suit, led the way, while the skeleton, whose gait was a little slow on account of his physical deficiencies, brought up a straggling rear.

The skeleton looked up at the high buildings and then on the little group walking just in front of him. They were chatting together and walking on

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as merrily and as unconscious of the jostling crowd as if it had been a bright crisp October day and as if no one were near. The strong man was looking down into the girl's face, and the skeleton could see her smiling under the straight black bang brushed far down over her forehead. The surroundings made the skeleton feel very much out of it all, and several times he was tempted to turn his back on the snake-charmer and the great city and return to his own country. At last he saw a large colored picture of a skeleton, with his name pasted under it. It didn't look at all like him; but it gave him a new interest in life, and he trudged slowly on to the house of Mrs. Meggs.

The same day the three freaks appeared at Pullen's museum. The snake-charmer encompassed herself with her pets, the strong man juggled cannon-balls, and the skeleton exhibited his emaciated frame in a red figure suit.

From eleven o'clock in the morning

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until half-past ten at night the three freaks sat upon their respective platforms and received the public. During the intermissions the two men, by a tacit understanding, took turns in talking to the snake-charmer. It was a poor method of making love, for neither of the trio was ever out of sight of the other two.

As a matter of fact, they found it differed very slightly from their Western experiences. The heat limited the attendance very materially, and the skeleton failed to sell a photograph or receive even one proposal of marriage.

The one excitement of the week came a few days later, when he was examined by the board of physicians at a hospital selected by the aggressive manager of the museum. The examination was a success, and the skeleton rose accordingly in the estimation of his manager and his fellow-freaks. A few days later he received a note from one of the doctors, asking him to name a price on his bones when they should no longer be of

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any use to him. The skeleton's face flushed scarlet as he read it, and for a moment he held the note between his fingers as if he were about to tear it into small pieces. Then he suddenly remembered the words of his friend, the legless man, and shoved the note in his pocket.

"Who is writing to you?" called the snake-charmer, from her platform.

The freaks were lounging about the hall, waiting for the gong which was the signal for the performers to climb upon their separate platforms and for the ticket-taker behind the brass railing to throw open the doors and admit the public. The snake-charmer, in a low-necked and short-sleeved blue silk dress with black velvet trimmings, was daintily dipping her pets in a small tub of luke-warm water. The skeleton walked over to her platform and dangled his long legs over the edge.

"Only a business note," he said. "Why don't you have those fangs pulled? No one would know."

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The girl let one of the pets wrap its thick body gently around her arm and then plunged it in the bucket.

"No one but the managers," she said, "but as they fix the salaries, the fangs stay." The girl allowed her arm to remain in the tub, and moved the snake with her hand slowly through the water.

"What is the chance of danger?" said the skeleton.

The girl drew her bare arm slowly out of the tub and smiled.

"None at all, as long as you look sharp. A snake always coils itself up and darts at you when it means mischief. That gives you plenty of time."

The snake rose from the bottom of the tub and pushed its head slightly above the water.

"Plenty of time for what?" asked the skeleton.

The girl shoved the serpent's head gently under the water, and looked back at the skeleton.

"To point its head in the other direc-

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tion," and she once more shoved the serpent's head under water.

The animal seemed to resent the girl's interference, and, as Maobi's hand left its head once more, the flat, ugly thing shot through the water and pushed its head out into the air.

"You beast," said the girl, and she knocked it back with her open hand.

"I should think—" But the skeleton's conjecture was interrupted by the woman's shriek that rang out through the big room and was echoed slowly along the narrow empty halls.

Maobi pushed open the door of the light wire cage in which she sat, and, coming out carefully, closed it behind her and then went down on both knees on the platform. The skeleton grabbed the girl's hand in both of his.

"Maobi!" he cried.

The girl pulled her hand sharply away from him.

"Let go, you fool!" she said. "Take that knife—don't you see it there by the

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cage! Now cut my finger right across that little red spot. Don't be afraid—I'm not."

The skeleton did as he was bid. His hand was quite true and steady, but his face had turned very white and his lips were compressed tightly against each other. Not once did his eyes meet those of the girl, for she was looking straight across the hall at the strong man, who was sitting heavily in his chair like one stupefied. Not once did the girl become conscious of the skeleton until she felt her finger being pressed tightly between his teeth. Then she cried and tried to pull her hand away; but the skeleton overcame her strength, which was fast leaving her, and alternately drew the blood from her finger and spat it upon the floor.

The strong man climbed down from his platform and walked unsteadily across the room.

"My God, girl," he said; "tell me, how bad is it?"

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"You get a hack," said the girl.

The strong man turned from her slowly and pushed his way through a crowd of half frightened freaks and attachés of the museum, and then ran hurriedly into the street, still dressed in his fleshings. The crowd that gathered about the unusual sight soon saw a short, pretty girl, leaning heavily against a tall, thin man, come out of the museum, get into a carriage and drive quickly away. Both of them were dressed in long ulsters down to their feet, and the woman was so weak that the tall man almost carried her in his arms.

"Say, mister," said a boy to the strong man, "what's the matter with the lady?"

The eyes of the strong man wandered from the fast disappearing hack to the small boy, then back to the hack again.

"Poisoned sure, stung in the hand," he muttered, "and I guess she thinks I'm a damned coward. Curse you, get

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out of my way!" and he shoved the small boy stumbling back into the crowd.

The skeleton led the girl into the first house where he saw a doctor's sign. The parlor was very small and stuffy. The windows were open, but the cheap lace curtains hung quite listlessly in the absence of any semblance of a breeze. The heat rose from the pavements in an oily vapor, and the skeleton felt himself becoming almost as faint as the girl leaning heavily on his arm. The doctor, dressed in a black frock coat and a white lawn tie, came into the room, wiping the perspiration from his forehead. As Maobi and the doctor disappeared through a pair of heavy portières, the skeleton walked to the window and watched the driver of the carriage that had brought them wave the flies listlessly from the dripping sides of the horses. The heat seemed to be more intense at the window than in the room, and the skeleton returned to a large plush lounge that stood in a dark cor-

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ner. He listened for the sound of voices from the doctor's office, but everything was quite still.

The heat in the city had grown more intense, the dime museum had closed its doors, and the three freaks were still at the Meggs boarding-house. The skeleton only had been able to secure an engagement at a rival house.

"What she needs," said the strong man, "is some fresh country air."

The skeleton did not reply for a minute, but fumbled a letter in his coat-pocket.

"We've spent all we have on doctor's bills, as you know," he said. "My salary isn't due until next Saturday, and now it is only Wednesday. Our board-bill comes to more than that, anyhow. I guess they know we're pretty well strapped, by the way they keep their eye on us. How much ought we to have?"

"A hundred would fix us," said the strong man; "but we might as well wish

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for a thousand. A week more of this, I believe, though, would kill her."

"Is she asleep?" asked the skeleton.

"Yes, don't wake her." But the skeleton rose and walked noiselessly into the room where the snake-charmer lay stretched on an iron cot. Her face was very pale, and she lay as motionless as the dead. The skeleton tiptoed to her side and watched her fearfully until he saw her breathing very gently. There was just the suggestion of a smile on his lips as he laid his thin hand lightly on a few loose strands of her hair that lay on the pillow.

"It'll all come right, little girl," he whispered; "it'll all come right."

Then he left the room as noiselessly as he had come, and walked out of the house without stopping to speak to any one.

In a few hours he returned and ran lightly up the steps of the boarding-house. In a moment more he had burst into the common sitting-room where

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the strong man and the snake-charmer were sitting, gloomily looking from the window into the court below.

"It's all right," he cried. "I've the money now. We'll all go away together. To-morrow we start for the country, where Maobi will get to be herself again. No, you mustn't ask me where or how I got it. It's enough to know that it's here," and he thrust a roll of bills into the sick girl's hand. There were tears in her eyes, and she tried to kiss the hand that had given her the money, but the skeleton drew it sharply away.

There was great rejoicing in the Meggs house that day, for Mrs. Meggs had been paid her board-bill, and the three freaks had arranged to leave the city on the following day and spend the next two weeks in a quiet place by the sea-shore, where the snake-charmer could recover from the sting of her favorite rattlesnake.

"I'll give them notice that I quit to-

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night," said the skeleton, as he left the room on his way to the museum.

"Good luck go with you," answered Maobi and the strong man, and the two were left together for their last day in New York.

All the afternoon the skeleton sat on the platform in his red figure suit, but he did not see the mass of upturned faces as they crowded curiously about him. His mind was far away on the green meadows of the country, and he saw, as he had often seen in pictures, a long strip of white sand and rows of cool, silver-crested waves breaking on the hard, smooth beach. At his side he imagined the snake-charmer, with the color fast returning to her cheeks. And it was all his doing—the result of his sacrifice. How happy they were there together, away from the stuffy museum and the grimaces of Mrs. Meggs. Every minute seemed an hour; and when ten o'clock finally came, and the crowd passed slowly out, the skeleton ran to

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his dressing-room, and, without waiting to dress, threw his street-clothes into his satchel, and with only his ulster over his red tights, hurried back to the boarding-house for the last time.

He bounded up the long narrow staircase and broke into the sitting-room. He paused for a moment at the door; for the room was empty, and there was a peculiarly vacant air about it.

"Maobi!" he cried; "Maobi!" But there was no answer. He dropped his valise and darted into the girl's sleeping-room. Once more the skeleton stood still and looked nervously about him. The bed was empty, the drawers of the bureau were open, and Maobi's trunk was no longer in the corner where it had always stood.

The skeleton stumbled over to the open window and looked out on the court. He saw long lines of clothes strung from roof to roof, and in a window opposite a man sat quietly smoking his pipe, as if he were quite satisfied

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With his head bent low in front of him, he rushed on over the rough cobblestones. The thundering noise overhead seemed to inspire him for a moment, but soon the noise became fainter and fainter, and, looking up, he saw the train with its long line of lights wavering from side to side as it dashed on far ahead of him. The high iron posts of the structure seemed to waver, too, and twist themselves into bent and gnarled shapes. The heat was beginning to tell on the overwrought brain of the living skeleton. He staggered over to the sidewalk and tried to focus his thoughts on a window full of gaudily-colored lithographs; but his mind refused to act at his will's bidding, and the window appeared but as a kaleidoscope of many colors. In an indefinite way, he knew he wished to reach a railway station; and, as he knew but the name of the one at which he had at first landed in New York, he asked a man standing in a doorway to direct him to it. For a

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air from the river floated up the narrow streets and was wafted slowly and mercilessly into the open windows of the high-built houses. An occasional man trudged wearily over the baked pavements. Women lay in the narrow darkened hallways and sat on the basement steps, nursing half-naked babies in their arms.

To all of this, the skeleton paid no heed. The long, weird figure hurried faster and faster along the empty thoroughfares. Once he fell over a child, but neither its cries nor the mother's curses reached his ears. The figures he sought he could not find.

From the dimly lighted and high-walled street, he turned into the Bowery. The myriads of lights seemed to flame up into a great blaze, and the skeleton was for the moment blinded, just as one is who looks into the head-light of an engine as it draws into a darkened station. Overhead an elevated train dashed quickly by. The skeleton followed it.

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seemed to hold the skeleton with a peculiar fascination.

"I've no right to," he murmured; "I've no right to. It wouldn't be fair to the hospital."

The watchman of the pier suddenly woke from a long doze, and walked leisurely to where the skeleton lay.

"Get up, get up," he said; "this is no place for you." And he shook the living freak roughly by the shoulder.

As the skeleton turned, the ulster fell back open, and the long lean figure in the red tights stood clearly defined in the bright starlight.

"God Almighty!" gasped the watchman, and the skeleton jumped up from his resting-place and was gone. To his disordered mind, there came the patter of running feet. For a minute they seemed to gain on him, and then they became fainter and gradually died away, while he ran further and further into the darkness of the night.

A hand was laid on his forehead, and

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he heard a voice speaking to him very gently. Gradually he opened his eyes, for the light was very bright and it hurt. Before him stood Maobi and the doctor with the white tie.

"I guess he must have fainted," said Maobi. "You're all right now, though, aren't you? Come along; we must hurry back home. I must get something for this snake-bite."

A few minutes later Maobi and the skeleton were driving back to Mrs. Meggs's in their hired carriage.

"So I didn't sell my bones, and—and you didn't leave me, after all, did you?" said the skeleton.

"Leave you?" said Maobi. "I guess not. We're in it—for keeps."

And although the sun was shining and the carriage was quite open, she held his hand in the one which had not been stung for at least a minute.

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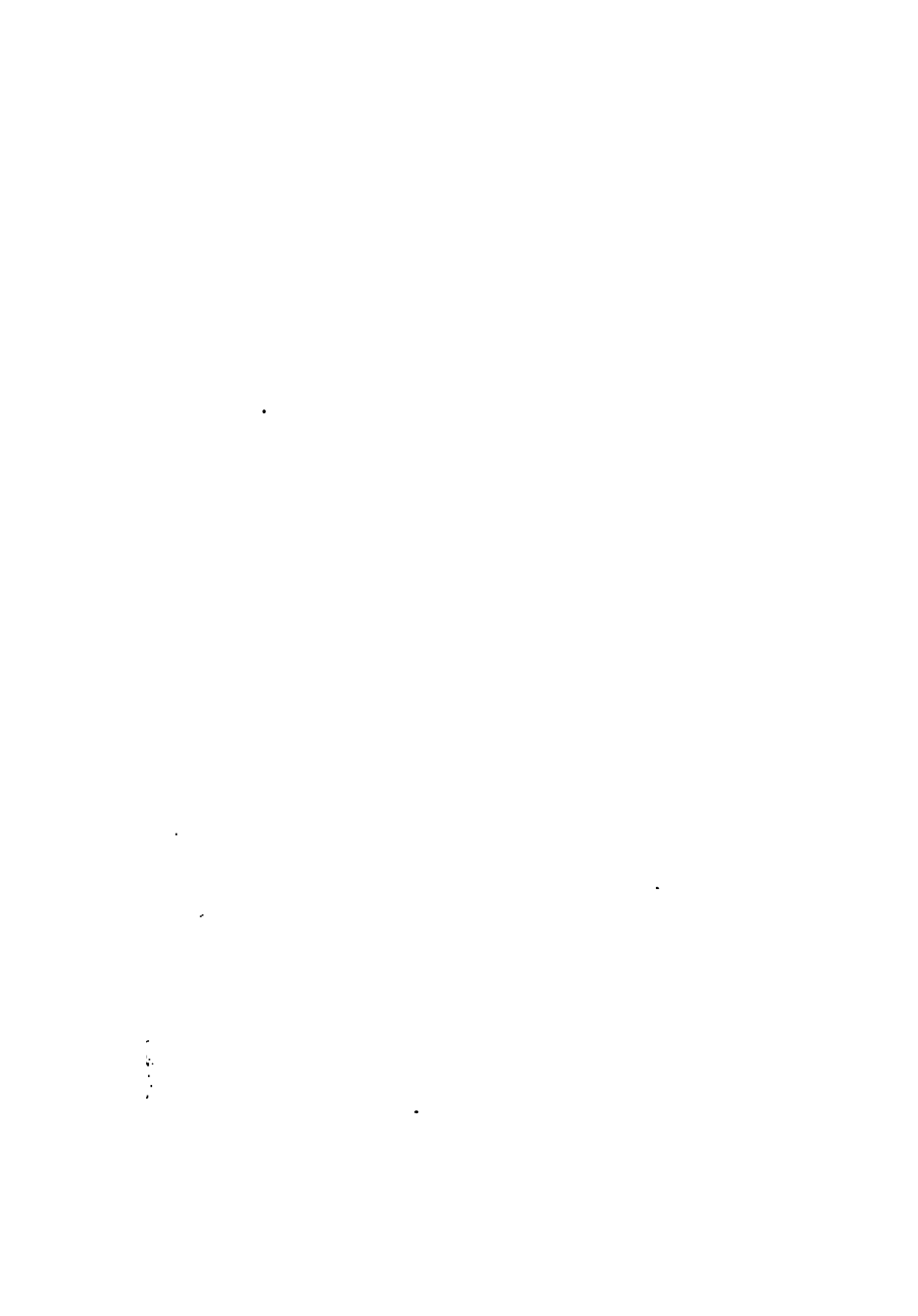
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LA GOMMEUSE



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Three of the four lodgers at No. 51 were watching the sun set through the high, naked poplars across the Arno, and they regarded it with a sympathetic interest almost worthy of the cause.

The last cab of the afternoon parade was slowly crawling like a drunken beetle down the road toward the gates of the Cascine. The clacking of the driver's whip had long passed out of hearing, and there remained no sound to disturb them—nothing but the three seated there on the gray stone bench watching the red disc disappear behind the green banks across the river. In the center sat the Countess, a great bunch of violets at her waist, her hands half-hidden with pearls and emeralds, and soiled balayouse showing at the edge of her skirt. On the right was the Baron,

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with his eyes fixed across the tiny stream watching the red sky fading into the first gray tints of the coming night.

The American sat on the left. His face was clear-cut and deeply furrowed—furrowed by the plow of excess and unrest. When instincts sentimental and good had come into his life, he had treated them as a gardener treats sprouting weeds. He had struck them down and tossed away the roots. The fact that the weeds still grew perhaps accounted for the fact that his face was not yet altogether bad.

They had left No. 51 separately this particular afternoon, and had met, as they generally did meet every evening now, on this quiet bench, where the Florentines or the tourists seldom came.

No. 51 was pretty much like every other house on the block of which it formed the center. They were all heavy, gloomy places of modern building, which took on much of the air of the old palaces. Their fronts were of

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gray stone and gray plaster and gray shutters, which seemed forever shut against the sun of summer and winter alike. Inside the walls were covered with cheap wall-paper, or the cheaper stencil of modern Italian art. The furniture was as unpicturesque as the ill-painted amorous Cupids above it, and the rooms were always furnished. The tenants of this particular neighborhood did not come with their own pet chairs and table-linen. They took their rooms by the month. Sometimes they left in a day, sometimes after many years, but their affairs and their futures seemed to depend largely on the next day's mail. The letter-carriers, however, were not very much occupied hereabouts. The lodgers conducted their transactions through the *poste restante*.

Almost every town and every city of both continents has numbered among its people men, and occasionally women, who have left their homes under what is tactfully referred to as a cloud. Amer-

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ican young men from the States and Englishmen usually seek a new life in the West or Australia, or assist their peculiar talents to a broader outlet in the republics of South America, where they enter into large financial contracts with a dubious dynasty, or form a little government of their own. But it is not so with the men or the women of the East. When the cloud has formed over them in their own little town, their desire to visit far-distant lands, if such desire they ever had, vanishes as does their hope of a new life in this material world. They take what goods they may, and these bad people of the East follow the cloud that has obscured their fair name with the same persistency that once upon a time the good people of the East followed the star that finally rested over Bethlehem. But this cloud never rests; it moves on with an unerring relentlessness. Its course has been unreasonably shaped, but it varies never. There are some towns on which its shadow has

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happily seldom fallen, and there are others which are rarely free from its pall. The adventurers and adventuresses of the East are those who live in its shadow, and although it may change from gray to black, it is always there, a speck in the deep blue dome of the Riviera, or a mere zephyr hurrying across the clear sky that lights the Paris boulevards and the Bois de Boulogne on a warm May morning. So trivial is it sometimes that it finds its owner well settled as a member of clubs, or playing the rôle of *grande dame* in the salons of the great world, sometimes at court. But the little speck or the zephyr grows in size and darkness until they who live in its shadow must once more take up their chattels and follow its course on and on in its chosen circuit.

The four clouds of the four lodgers at 51 were just now hovering over Florence, a condition which brought no particular benefit either to the permanent residents of that town or the lodgers

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themselves. The weather was bad, the times were worse, and every morning the papers told of the clear days and the brilliant opening of the winter season in Paris, and of how the advance-guard were already comfortably settled at Nice and Monte Carlo. And yet the four lodgers still hung dismally on in the city of flowers. For what reason, they did not explain to each other. It is doubtful if they could have done so even to themselves.

There had been silence for some minutes when the fourth lodger announced her arrival by the sharp clanging of a bicycle bell. She came to a sudden halt in front of them, jumped from her machine, folded her arms over the handle-bar, and burying her chin in her breast, gazed tentatively at the three friends in front of her. She was dressed in a very short skirt, a pair of leggins, and a tight tailor-made waist. The most striking things about her were her very small, trim figure, and a face that would have

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been more in keeping on the walls of the Botticelli room in the Belle Arti than on a young woman generally known as "La Gommeuse." She was Parisienne from the tips of her varnished boots to the divided crown of her brown Alpine hat, and she had an amount of esprit entirely out of keeping with her extremely diminutive body. Unlike her three companions, she rejoiced in being a conspicuous individual in the life of Florence of that day. She drove in the Cascine, and was a distinguished habituée of the opera and the café chantant, and would have given up her dinner for a week rather than have missed a day at the races at any track within a day's journey from Florence. As a matter of fact, the place did not satisfy her, but she always did her best to get what she could out of it. "Je suis Parisienne" was her motto and invariable conclusion to all discussions, and her popularity was therefore not very great in Italy.

"You are a jolly-looking crew," she

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said to the trio on the bench. "You sit here and look at the sunset like lovers who haven't got enough to pay for a marriage license."

"You are not so interesting," said the Baron, "when you tell unpleasant truths as when you draw to a greater extent on your youthful imagination. Take a cigarette, and tell us what you did last night. By your make-up I should imagine you were doing a *café chantant*."

"No," said La Gommeuse; "comic opera at the Arena. Safe place, that Arena, but very amusing last night."

"What was amusing?" asked the American. "You or the opera?"

"I was," said La Gommeuse; "very amusing. Do you know that brute Catelli?"

"No," said the American, "but I suppose from the fact that you call him that brute Catelli that he said 'bellina' as you passed him, and that you promptly hit him."

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did," said La Gommeuse, "with my
ol, three times."

eally," broke in the Baron, "for a
bred Parisienne——"

Je suis une dame très nerveuse." La
neuse was becoming excited.

ervous is good," said the American.
on't that Italian suppose that I

I was good-looking before I ever
to this old place?"

here's a letter," said the Countess,
e tossed a thick envelope to the
h girl. "Read it—it may keep
quiet."

Gommeuse glanced at the address,
then looked up to see if they had
ed the red blood that tingled
gh her cheeks. No one had ever
her blush, and they did not notice
this occasion, even had the blushes
existed. La Gommeuse stuck the
in her pocket and relit her cigar-

ou don't seem very keen about your
spondent," said the American.

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La Gommeuse shrugged
"It's the same old story,
"Judging by the bul
ope," said the Baron, "
be a long one."

"Long or short," said
"draw a line under it
the total says, 'Come bac
"Where?"

"To Paris—to me."

"I have a nodding ac
Paris," said the Amer
"me'?"

"My husband," said L

The three friends sitti
looked up suddenly, a
their gaze on the gravel
a moment there was a con

The American was th
it.

"Why aren't you alw
said; "that's my idea of

La Gommeuse straigh
body and clasped her k
knees. "Is it?" she an

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haps you think I haven't got a husband. He's a lot better than you will ever be."

"Don't talk about the future," said the American; "the past has reached my limit as a weight carrier."

La Gommeuse glanced defiantly at the trio facing her.

"You three," she said, "have been pretty good friends of mine, but I never told you my story because you never told me yours. I know you've got one, but it wasn't my place to ask for it. I'll tell you mine gratis. I am married, and I married well. He owns a shop on the Rue du Bac, near the Bon Marché. Pas grand' chose, but he is rich. I had my carriage, two men on the box—everything!"

The Countess nodded her head at the girl as a sign to discontinue, but the latter was excited and ran on.

"There were two marriages that day at the Madelaine, and I saw the other woman afterward at the Cascade. She sat near me. I saw her lace, and I saw

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the men who were with her. She outclassed me, and when she passed me she looked me all over as a duchess looks at the monkeys in the Jardin d'Acclimatation. I hated her, and I hated the man who had married me—everything!"

"Notwithstanding," said the American, "I'll bet she had two homely sisters in pink. I don't know why, but good-looking Paris brides always have two homely sisters in pink, and yet I suppose the sisters must marry sometimes."

"No, they weren't," said La Gommeuse; "they were in blue, and I hated them, too. I knew they all had something I had not, and I cried, and made a fool of myself. Not before them, but afterward. I was sorry for what I had done. I was sorry for what my mother had done for me. I was a shopkeeper's wife, and I wanted to be a great woman, with a husband who sat on the terrace of the Epatants. I told him so. I told him he had ruined my chance in life. I forgot that he had raised me from

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nothing. I didn't know the world then; I didn't see things as they were, and so I left him—and came here. I hated the world—I mean other women—then; but, good God! how I hate it now.”

“And yet he says ‘come back!’ ” said the Baron.

“Yes, he says ‘come back,’ and I wish to God that I could.”

“It's not far,” remarked the Countess.

La Gommeuse closed her teeth sharply and turned away to the setting sun. “But I can't, I can't,” she whispered.

“You can't?”

“No,” said the girl; “I can't. When I left him, I not only took all that he had given me, but I went to the safe—do you understand? the safe—and I took everything there was in it—twenty thousand francs. I went down into the shop with a candle and robbed my own husband, and put the money with the rings he had given me in a bag, and stole out of the house in the night. For one day I lived in the same town with him, and

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then I knew what sort of a woman I was. But it was too late, so I took the money and came here, where I heard there was sunshine, and what have I found?"

The girl threw herself on the grass and sobbed as if her heart were going to break. For a few moments there was silence, and then suddenly she jumped to her feet, brushed her sleeve across her eyes, and the next moment was riding like mad down the gravel path.

"And the most remarkable thing about that story is," said the Baron, "that I believe it."

"Yes!" said the American. "Exhibit B, I mean that fat letter with the Paris post-mark, certainly was in her favor."

"Rather, but why exhibit B?"

The American hesitated. "Oh, I don't know, except I always call important documentary evidence exhibit B's. There was once an exhibit B that had a great effect on my future. In fact, the future of a large country, because it was the

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direct cause of my leaving it, and I don't suppose I'll ever go back."

"That *is* rather rough on the country," said the Countess; "and it was a large country, too."

"Well, yes, it was a pretty large country, but it might have been a good deal larger and still too small for me and that particular exhibit B," said the American.

"I wonder," mused the Baron, "if she'll ever turn her back on her friends and——"

"Friends?" asked the American.

The Baron rested his white pointed beard on the head of his cane, and continued, unmoved:

"Companions would perhaps be the better word. Turn her back on her companions, and look at the sun setting and green banks and water that moves?"

"And wear flowers at her waist," said the American.

The Countess involuntarily put her hand to the bunch of violets, as a man

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suddenly feels for the safety of his watch in a crowd.

"Perhaps," she said, "if she lives long enough."

The Baron raised his eyes to the heavens in a silent protest. Two sparrows fluttered up and swung merrily on the branches of a little naked bush in front of them. For a few moments there was silence as they chirped on the swinging branch so conscious of themselves and so heedless of the rest of the living world about them.

"I have made," said the Baron, "twenty thousand francs many times in twenty minutes."

"And I," answered the American, "have lost as much many times in as many seconds."

"One-third," continued the Baron, "of that twenty thousand is a considerable fraction under seven thousand."

"Three of those considerable fractions would make one thousand francs," said the American. "Traveling is very ex-

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pensive, and bank presidents and detective bureaus have always given me credit for doing things well."

The two men, having spoken, directed their attention to the sparrows, who had fluttered down from the branch and were pecking for their supper at the base of the bush. The Countess was examining with much interest a large diamond on the second finger of her right hand. The American, still apparently looking at the hungry sparrows, continued the conversation:

"Yes, it is a very pretty stone, but still I think the *tout ensemble* would be the gainer by its absence. The pearls and emeralds are so effective in themselves."

"If," said the Baron, "we who are supposed to live by our wits, but as a matter of fact by our remittances, had not suffered so much of late by this decline in American securities—" Here he looked at the American.

"That," said the latter, "is a ques-

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tion of investment. I made my money quickly, very quickly, even for America, and the least thing they say about me is that I am living on my capital. I divided it when I was thirty into twenty equal shares, so my income is assured me at that time at least. Seven thousand francs would deprive me of my annual effort at Monte Carlo, or I might let the Grand Prix go by this year."

"Or you might," suggested the Baron, "deprive yourself of a few months at the end of the twenty years; a few months would not matter so very much after all."

"No," said the American, "especially if they happen to fall due in the winter. I hate cold weather."

The Countess had taken off her ring now, and was moving it between her middle fingers of her hands so that the last rays of the daylight fell full upon its many faces and clean-cut edges.

"My next remittance will not come in at least a week," said the Baron;

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should have to borrow from one of you."

The Countess and the American glanced at each other. The Baron had long been considered the banker of No. 51. He had always shown much pride in his solvency, and it seemed strange that it was he who was to be the borrower. The sun had disappeared now behind the hill, the little birds had flown to a better pasture, and the three were quite alone. The first chill breeze of the coming night blew down from the high white-capped mountains, and the evening mist rose slowly from the sluggish stream at their feet. The Countess pulled her fur cloak about her shoulders, and the three lodgers walked slowly back through the deserted park to their enforced home.

* * * * *

The weather had turned cold and stormy, and the next day found the stone streets a checker-board of puddles and the Arno a rushing mass of mud

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and débris from the mountains. It was raining hard as the four lodgers left No. 51 and drove in a closed, ill-smelling cab to the station, just in time to catch a night train for Paris. It was out of season, and the rain and cold had driven the men who usually lounge about the platform under the shelter of the old station.

And so the four lodgers stood alone, huddled together in a little group in front of an empty compartment. The American said something about meeting in the spring, and regards to his friends at the Jockey Club. The Baron raised his hat as if to add decorum to his decorous words of farewell, which he delivered in the best of French. The Baron always spoke the best of French immediately after dinner and on occasions when the finer emotions were to be expressed. La Gommeuse, in a great fur coat and a cloth hat but half covering her mass of curls, stood in the center of the group, reaching hardly to the shoul-

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der of the Countess. In the dim light of the flickering gas-jet they could see that she was smiling; it was a little forced perhaps, but the trio that she was so soon to leave could hardly inspire mirth as they stood there with the wind whistling down the deserted platform. But in this moment of farewell she still found the words ready which had so often smoothed out their troubles and many nights taken the place of a friend's hand as they lay on a bed of sickness.

"Not later than Grand Prix day," she ran on; "and if I am in the pelouse, you must come and speak to me and tell me if Blanc and Rothschild have their money on. And then some morning just we four will go to Villebon, where your great friends will not be likely to see you breakfasting up in the trees with your friend of the haute bourgeoisie."

The last bell rang; the conductor came forward to close the door. The Countess took the girl in her arms and kissed her twice on the mass of curls over the

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clear broad forehead. "Au revoir," was all she said, and pressed the bunch of violets into her hand. The girl jumped into the empty carriage, the door was slammed after her, and the outline of a small face pressed against the glass was the last they saw of La Gommeuse.

When the train had passed beyond the station lights, the girl threw herself on the broad cushions and lay for some moments looking up at the dim lamp in the roof of the compartment. "Thank God, it is over," she said aloud, and raised the violets to her lips. But they were old and stale, and they reminded her of things that were gone. She jumped to the floor, and letting the window fall, threw the flowers far out into the night. For a moment she leaned against the frame, the wind blowing back her curls and baring her forehead to the cold drops of the driving rain. Through the darkness she could see the faint black outlines of the Duomo, and

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rising at its side the Campanile, which is the sign of Florence. With drawn lips she gazed into the darkness until the lines of the great cathedral faded into the night, and then, still holding by the window-sill, she sank sobbing to her knees and rested her head upon her hands. "I am going back," she said—"I am going back." And so she was going back—back to Paris, with its sunshine and its green Bois, back to the boulevards and the theaters and the cafés and the myriads of lights, back to her home, and back to the man she loved.

The three figures on the platform watched the train until it turned the curve and the rear lights had disappeared into the darkness. Then they passed out, through the hot station, past the long line of dripping cabs, and through the narrow streets to the Arno. The circle of lamps stretching from the Old Bridge to the Cascine hung, in the rain-swept night, like a great necklace of

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cheap, unpolished topaz. The Countess walked in the middle, holding an arm of each of her companions. Their heavy coats were buttoned tight over their chins and mouths, and their hats were pulled far over their faces. Even had they been able, it is doubtful if they would have spoken. By a silent understanding they had refused the offers of the many drivers at the station, and had gone far out of their way in returning by the Arno. For some reason best known to themselves, each wished to delay as long as possible the return to their common home. And so they wandered on through the mist and rain, meeting no one until they found the porter at 51 waiting to put out the lights.

"Good night," called the American, and ran up the stone steps, two at a bound. The Baron and the Countess followed him slowly. The man was in advance, and as he passed the door of the apartment where La Gommeuse had lived, he slightly raised his hat, a last

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token of respect to the girl who had so lately passed out of their lives. The Countess stopped, and leaned against the balustrade whilst she caught her breath.

"One might think by your bow, Baron," she said, "that you were passing a funeral."

"No," he answered; "on the contrary, this time it is the dead who salutes the living."



OUT OF HER CLASS



OUT OF HER CLASS

The Eltons had gone South to see less of their friends and more of each other. Since his father's death Arthur Elton had found it necessary to devote all the time to the office he could possibly spare from dinners and dances. Occasionally he saw his mother at breakfast and his sister at dinner—that is, when they happened to be dining out at the same house. Yet, like most small families, they were peculiarly united in their affections, although circumstances had kept them constantly apart.

Elton had regarded his sister Alice much as he would a growing plant. Her development from a girl in short dresses to a thorough girl of society was a never-failing source of interest and amusement to him. When she had been much younger she used to come to his room to

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see him add the finishing touches to his evening toilet, and to listen to the unpleasant things he said about his ties and washerwoman, and the terrible errors committed by girls he knew which had quite ruined their social career. This was his idea of telling her what not to do. He knew that when Alice did come out the sort of time she had would materially affect his own enjoyment. He did not fancy spending the entire evening with her at dances, and he was also anxious that she should add credit to the family name. When she did come out, and women told him his sister was a success, and he saw her surrounded by the right sort of men, there was no one who enjoyed her success as much as he did.

Alice and her mother went South in June, with the understanding that Arthur was to join them a month later. They settled themselves in a small cottage which stood in a wood a few hundred feet from the hotel. They had not ex-

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pected to find many people who would interest them, and they were not disappointed. The men and women at the hotel were gathered together from every corner of the South. Along with representatives of the best of the old families was a sprinkling of the sort that wear a good deal of jewelry, and who in the eyes of the Eltons were very much overdressed. There was dancing from eleven until dinner-time, which was at one o'clock, and after dinner the men who had traps took their favorites driving, and those who did not have traps, or were not favorites, had a very good time standing on the piazzas and making remarks about those who were more fortunate. After supper the dancing was resumed to the strains of a very bad quartet of violins, a piano, and a shrieking cornet.

In all of this the Eltons took little or no part. A few of the women at the hotel called at the cottage, and the calls were promptly returned, but no inti-

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macies followed. The Eltons were not popular. The girls at the hotel said Alice was a nice, quiet young thing who was good to her mother, and there their opinion rested. They presumed the mother was an invalid, and the girl not sufficiently intelligent to enjoy their amusements. This was very well as long as the mother and daughter were alone, but they knew that the head of the family was fond of other society than their own, and they did not believe that he would be content to remain forever in the cottage.

And yet among all the girls they could see no one whom they thought it worth while to adopt for his special benefit. There were pretty girls who were very stupid, and girls who were not pretty, and who had enough sense to know it, and had adopted certain artificial virtues of which the Eltons did not approve; but there were none whom they thought sufficiently attractive to take into their confidence. Mrs. Elton was

OUT OF HER CLASS

less hopeful than her daughter. Alice had seen her brother in society, which his mother had not, and very often she did not agree with her brother's choice as to the girls to whom he chose to devote himself. Her greatest fear was that he would be attentive to some one to whom her mother or herself could not be polite.

"Arthur is always finding virtues in a girl," she said, "that exist for no one but himself. I should not be surprised to see him devote himself to the worst flirt at the Springs."

She spoke in generalities, but she was really afraid of one girl. Her name was Zoë White, and she was admitted to be easily the belle of the Springs. Tall and well-built, with big gray eyes and a mass of fluffy brown hair, she was at least a girl about whom every man was sure to express an opinion. Her complexion varied with the tone of her gowns, which were well made and rather accentuated her well-developed figure.

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Alice Elton objected to her because her gloves were usually slightly soiled, and there was an air about her clothes especially about her throat, that looked as if she had dressed hurriedly and for men, and not, as most girls do, for other women. She had been engaged to half a dozen men, and boasted of the fact to every new man she met. At the time of the Eltons' arrival an insignificant gentleman named Crowley was her accepted suitor. Both of them had horses at the Springs, and they drove each other out on alternate afternoons. He was rich and had the prestige of an array of love affairs almost equal to that of Miss White herself. The people at the hotel said that when two such celebrities as Zoë White and young Crowley got together something had to come of it, and the date of the marriage was variously fixed at from one to six months.

Miss White was at her best when perched on the box seat of her high cart. The close-fitting cloth dress and the tra-

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had been imported from New York, and the effect was very smart. Alice Elton suggested to her mother that the cart, dress and all had been bought in a set, just as croquet and tennis sets are bought—"all complete"—and she was fearful of the result when a part of the outfit should wear out, and Miss White should attempt to replace the loss without consulting the manufacturers.

The two girls seldom met. Miss White had made numerous advances to Alice, but they were not received with much enthusiasm. It was not usual for Zoë White to be persistently polite to any one. She occasionally stopped to speak to a group of old ladies knitting on the piazza, but this was only a plea to be treated gently in their garrulous talks. To her rivals she was perhaps more than civil, because by long experience she found it paid. These were the women she feared. Old ladies could talk only of what they heard. It was the girls of her own age and her own

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set who saw her commit the follies which had made her famous, that she dreaded. Perhaps she saw that Alice Elton had certain dangerous attractions which she and the other women at the Springs did not have, or it may have been from a certain goodness of heart which had been kept under for some time past, but certain it is that she tried to be very kind to Alice, and that Alice politely but positively refused such kindness.

Once or twice Alice had gone over to the hotel with her mother, and had accepted the attentions of some of Miss White's lovers with apparent pleasure. Why she did this she probably did not know herself, unless it was an undefined desire for the admiration she was so used to in the city. After leading a man on for an evening she always woke up the next morning with a keen regret for her behavior, and with a feeling that she had done something unworthy of her. Then she went over to the hotel to breakfast and utterly ignored her admirer of

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the evening before. The only effect produced was slightly to reduce the young man's opinion of himself, and seriously to annoy Miss White, to whom he was sure to open his heart and say he was going to cut Miss Elton hereafter for good and all.

It was late in July when Arthur Elton joined his family at the Springs. When he left New York for the South he thought that he had been very much overworked, and was run down in consequence. He decided that when he reached the Springs he would lie down on a lounge in his mother's cottage, and stay there until his month's vacation had come to an end; but when he left the train at the little station in the Virginia hills, and had climbed to the top of an old stage-coach, he drew in a long breath of the fresh mountain air and felt quite himself again. He at once decided that he would send for his riding clothes by the first mail, and spend the next month riding over the mountains

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with Alice for his companion. He sat on the front seat of the stage with the driver, and discussed the horses that were pulling them over the rough mountain roads, the crops, and all the other subjects which he thought the driver's bucolic mind was capable of grasping. When all the subjects of conversation had at last been exhausted, he relapsed into a silent admiration of the beauty of the high hills, with their splendid growth of fir and hemlock, and of the sky, which seemed bluer to him than he had ever seen it before. While the stage was still at some distance from the hotel, in a narrow turning in the road it came suddenly upon Zoë White in her cart, with the faithful Crowley at her side. If a fairy princess with a gauze skirt and a silver wand had suddenly stepped out from one of the high rocks that lay along the road, young Elton could not have been more surprised than by the sudden appearance of Miss White. Before he reached his mother's

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cottage he had decided that he would not send for his riding clothes, but would probably do a great deal of driving.

He did not broach the subject of the girl he had seen in the cart until he saw her enter the dining-room on the evening of his arrival. Then he told his family how he had met her on the road, and asked them why they had failed to mention her in their letters. It was not difficult to see that Miss White was not a favorite. While his sister acknowledged her supremacy as the belle of the Springs, her dislike for the girl was ill-concealed.

"Why," said Elton, "what is the matter with her?"

"Oh, I don't know," said his sister; "she pencils her eyebrows and rouges, and generally makes herself unnaturally fascinating."

"What if she does?" said her brother. "Lots of girls do that down here. It is just as right and natural for her to put

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on rouge as it is for you to put on your skirt."

Mrs. Elton, who had regarded what her children were saying with the seriousness that mothers usually attach to the remarks of their offspring, suddenly broke into the conversation.

"I'm very sorry, Arthur," she said, "but Alice and I never thought you would like her at all, and this morning we refused an invitation for you to a supper that she gives to-night."

"You and Alice don't seem very fond of the belle of the Springs, but I suppose suppers are plentiful. I'm not sure that I shan't give her one myself."

"It's very simple," said the sister; "all you have to do is to tell Miss White to ask ten of her friends, and then get a case of champagne. The hotel supplies the crackers."

The coming of Arthur Elton to the Springs was a matter of much moment. The fact that he was Mrs. Elton's son was a sufficient guarantee as to his sound

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financial condition, and that he was from the North did not detract from his popularity among the women. He was a good-looking, athletic young man, whom the world, which had become acquainted with his position long before he had, had treated very well. If he had one decided advantage over other well-to-do young men, it was in the fact that he never tired of the pleasures that money brought him, and never grew callous to the fact that he had advantages which very few of his fellow-men ever enjoyed.

After supper it was the custom of the entire hotel to adjourn to the little office and wait for the mail. Elton took advantage of the opportunity to meet Miss White, and did not leave her until he had promised to devote himself to her during the entire evening. Then he joined his people, and told how the belle of the Springs stormed at young men's hearts at a first meeting, instead of wasting time in preliminary skirmishes.

When the dance began the three

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Eltons sat outside of the window and watched the people inside. There was much that was very new and interesting to them. Some of the dresses were distinctly odd, and the maneuvers of several gentlemen in the square dances were of the kind to be found only in a country hotel.

Elton left them presently, and went to dance with Zoë White, while the mother and sister watched them from the window. It would be difficult to say which interested them more, the apparent efforts of the girl to ensnare her partner's affections, or his apparent amusement at them. When he returned to his mother and sister he told them that he had been entrapped, and was going to supper with Miss White after all. The sister laughed, and the mother tried to look amused, and then they went off to a corner of the piazza, where he told them all that he and the other men had done since they had left the city.

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Elton had never attended a supper just like the one given to Miss White that evening, and when it was through, and he had gone out on the porch, he thought the night air had never seemed so pleasant. There was a refreshing purity about it, and he was glad to be alone.

The morning after the supper Elton ate a lonely breakfast, and then went outside to look for his people. He saw them sitting alone at the end of the porch. He nodded and bowed to his friends of the previous evening, and stopped for a moment to speak to Miss White.

"Mr. Elton," she said, "I have a very fair pair of cobs down here, and if you have nothing better to do, would you care to drive this afternoon?"

Elton glanced at his mother, who was some distance away, and could see that both she and his sister were smiling at him.

"Yes," he said; "I should be only

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too glad to go. What time would suit you best—shall we say four?”

“Very well,” she said, and then he moved on through the little groups of women and their admirers until he reached the place where his people had settled for their morning sewing.

The hot summer day dragged through its weary length as only a summer day can in Virginia. He had a chat with Miss White in the morning, and found her far more proficient in the art of flirtation than most young ladies that he had known. Later in the day they drove through the winding roads of the mountains. He had never before been in so picturesque a country, and by the time he returned to the hotel he felt that he was launched in an affair that could scarcely end before the breaking up of the season.

Much to the disgust of his rival, Crowley, he danced many times with Miss White that evening, and drove with her the next day. Indeed, for the

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next three days he saw little else at the Springs than Miss White. Once or twice he stopped to wonder exactly how it would end, but he had great confidence in his ability to break off affairs easily, and he saw no reason why this should prove an exception. It was on the evening of the third day that they left the ball-room together, and went to the corner of the hotel which Miss White said she had made her own by right of discovery. It was a little porch leading off from the second floor hallway, and was very dark and isolated.

It had been part of Elton's education to make love to women who wished to be made love to. In the few days that he had known this girl it was very easy to see that this was what she was used to; and it was not very difficult, for she was pretty, and he to a certain extent was susceptible. He had told a dozen women before that he loved them, and the conditions on this occasion were certainly favorable to such a falsehood. It was

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what she liked, it was what she courted, and so he told her that even in the short time that he had known her he had learned to care for her as he never had for any other woman. When he began he knew he did not mean it; he knew that she knew he did not mean it. But as he whispered to the girl the words he had so often before spoken to pretty women, he almost forgot for the time that he was not telling the truth. In the dim light he thought he had never seen any one half so pretty. The fact that he had only just met the girl was proof against any danger; so he ran on without a thought of the consequences. He told her all the silly lies that a man tells this sort of woman. But in such an affair, to the man of the world, there is a point at which there is a danger-signal, and he never passes this point. But Elton was very young, and did not see the danger-signal; he flew past it.

In his feigned eagerness he said something that might have been construed

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into a proposal. The second the words were out of his mouth he saw his mistake, and would have given anything to recall them. He was about to hurry on and save himself, when the girl suddenly drew her hand away from his, and looked directly into his eyes. With an effort he kept his eyes fastened on her, but he knew that he had grown absolutely cold. In that second he was aware that he had thrown away his life, and that he had made his mother and his sister miserable for the rest of their days. And then there came a sudden revulsion against the woman who sat beside him; the pretty face that in its pretended innocence had been listening to his silly words had turned into one of a hardened woman of the world. Even in the dim light he could see that her face was rouged, and her eyebrows absurdly blackened. Then he heard her say something about "meaning it," and "so sudden," and he knew he had had his chance and had thrown it away.

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To a certain extent she had taken advantage of him, but he believed that he deserved it. He had made a mistake, and he must take the consequences. Whether she loved him or not he had no idea, but there could be no doubt that if she did not really care for him she made a very good pretense of doing so.

That night he spent tossing about in his narrow bed; he could think of nothing but his mother and sister waiting for him in the morning. He repeated many times what he had to tell them, and he knew that it was going to break their hearts and make them unhappy always.

The next morning after breakfast he took them to a quiet corner of the porch and told them all that had happened, all—except the fact that he did not love the girl. There was no use in telling them this, and making their pain the greater. He would try to deceive them as he would the girl; for how long he did not know.

Later in the day he was congratulated

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by half the people in the hotel. It seemed to him the girl might have waited until they had decided together when the engagement should be officially announced, but in his present state of mind he really did not care much what she or any one else did.

The next day and the next he drove and walked with her in the daytime and danced with her at night. His mother and his sister treated her with civility, and that was all. They avoided the subject as much as possible, and when other people broached it they said as little as they could. There is nothing so conducive to positive affection or absolute hatred between a young man and a young woman as to put them together in a small place where they are each the most interesting of their sex that that particular place can boast of.

In a week Elton's mother and sister saw what Elton himself did not see, and that was that he was happy only when he was with Zoë White. He dropped

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his family entirely, and fretted and worried when they insisted on his occasionally dining with them alone. They would not believe that he was with Zoë White so constantly with so much apparent pleasure only because he had no one with whom to compare her.

Elton did sometimes compare her with his sister, but he knew that Alice had been brought up differently from other girls, and it would not have been fair to any one of them to make such a comparison. Once or twice he stopped to wonder at the change that had come over him, but his thoughts were always interrupted by the appearance of Miss White, on which occasions serious thoughts were entirely out of the question. The mother and sister made a desperate effort to overcome their aversion to the girl, and decided that the boy had found something in Zoë White which other people had failed to find; that there must be another side which she had never shown. That Arthur was falling

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honestly in love with the girl the two women had no doubt, and if she was not the one they would have chosen for a daughter and a sister, at least there must be something in her to have gained such a hold on Elton.

It was nearly two weeks after the engagement had been announced that the two girls met one afternoon in the woods near the house. All the day Alice Elton had been upbraiding herself for the way in which she had treated Zoë White, and she was glad to be alone with the girl, that she might try to make amends, and to make it more easy for the future.

"Zoë," she said, "I'm very glad to find you alone, for I want to speak to you, and beg your pardon for the mistake that mother and I have made. It isn't an easy thing to do, unless you choose to make it so. We were not friends before, because — well, because we didn't seem to have the same tastes. I misunderstood you, and I showed it. Then Arthur came, and he was cleverer

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than we were, and he liked you; and Zoë, we want to like you, too." Miss Elton held out her hand, but the other girl was looking at the ground. "Of course Arthur was the only brother I had, and I shouldn't have liked any one he cared for as much as he does for you—that is, until I became used to it. I know that I was brutally rude to you, but I want you to forget that, and let us not be enemies any longer—just sisters as we should be."

The Southern girl had listened to Alice's long, faltering apology without a word of help or forgiveness. Once or twice she had smiled, as if unconsciously but for the most part the words seemed to fail in fulfilling their purpose. But now it had become necessary that she should say something, and she stopped knocking pebbles into the little stream that ran by her feet, and turned to look at Alice.

"Do you know, Miss Elton," she said
"I've waited for this for a long time

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and I had almost given up the hope that it was ever going to come. I know it has been a pretty hard thing for you to say, for you don't like or understand me, whichever way you choose to put it; and so I appreciate it all the more. As for all the hard, unkind things you said about me before Arthur—before your brother came, they were uncharitable, and I wasn't used to them, and they cut me, and they made me hate you as I believe I never hated any one before. But that is your forte; that has been part of your Northern training. They like it up there; we don't down here. I didn't think of that then—I was too angry, I suppose; but it's all over now, and—well, I reckon we're quits." Alice Elton stepped to the side of the girl and tried to take her hand, but Zoë drew it away, and quickly rose to her feet. She was very nervous, and the tears were coming to her eyes. "You must forgive me, but I must go now. I promised to meet your brother at the hotel. We're

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going for a walk, and I'm late now." She started in the direction of the hotel, but when she had gone a few steps she turned suddenly about, took both of Miss Elton's hands in hers, and smiled in her face with the superiority with which a mother might look at her child. "Thank you, my dear," she said; "you have been very good; I won't be ungrateful. Good-by."

In another moment she had gone to meet her lover, and Alice was left alone with her book, and to wonder how Miss White meant to be grateful.

Elton and Zoë White walked up the steep hill, and wandered along a narrow path facing a deep valley. They did not talk much, for, like all lovers, their happiness was in being together. Sometimes they stopped to say something about the trees or the hills that lay in front of them, and sometimes it was only to allow him to pull a brier that had caught her skirt; but it always ended by some remark on his part which would

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have seemed very unnecessary to outsiders, but which was nevertheless very pleasant to her ears.

When they reached a turn in the path they stopped for lack of breath. The girl sat on the edge of a low flat rock, and Elton threw himself at full length on the ground at her feet. For a few minutes neither of them spoke. They were looking at the green hills across the cañon. The air was so clear that they could see the hills and valley stretching out for miles in front of them.

"I wish," he said, "that our life would always be as clear ahead of us as that valley, and that the right thing to do would always stand out as clearly as that fir-tree over there does against the sky." She looked at him questioningly, but he was still looking away and did not see her.

"I don't think it is very hard for a man or woman who has been well brought up to see the right thing to do, do you?"

"No," he said, without raising his

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eyes, "I suppose that is what stamps a man or woman of good breeding, to be able to choose the one right thing from the dozen wrong ones."

"Do you think I could always choose the right one?" she said.

Elton did not reply, but, reaching out, took her hand. She did not draw it away, but let it lie in his as cold and unresponsive as if it belonged to the dead. He looked up suddenly into her face, and saw a look there which he had never seen before. Her lips were tightly closed, and she was looking across the valley with a hard, determined expression that he feared without knowing why.

He pressed her hand, and called her "Zoë" several times, but she seemed unconscious of his presence, and paid no attention to him. Then, without taking her eyes from the hills across the valley, she began to talk as if to herself, and as if the man beside her might have been a great many miles away.

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"No," she said; "I don't think I can make a mistake, and that is what I wanted to speak to you about to-day. When you came here some weeks ago you heard me spoken of as a summer girl; you heard that I made love to men, and that dark corners and buggy-rides were my only source of amusement. Well, they were right, in a way. I sat in corners, and I drove with men in buggies, because I was taught that that was the most profitable way to spend my time.

"Don't you suppose that I tired of all that long ago? Do you think I get any pleasure out of men who know no more than I do; who give up their lives to talking a lot of lies to girls whom they have been brought up with as children, and should treat as sisters? But what is a girl going to do? I'm like every other woman that ever breathed: I like attention from men, and I'm going to get it even if I have to do the things I most detest.

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“Do you, and your mother, and your sister, think I am going to lead the life your sister does just because you think in the North that your sort of life is right and ours is wrong?”

“Why, I know perfectly well all the unkind things your sister said about me. If it had been one of these girls down here I shouldn’t have cared, for I could have taken the men away from her. But it was different with her. She didn’t care for these men here, and was glad to be left alone. The only way I could strike her was through you, and I did it. I have made her and your mother suffer as probably they have never suffered before. But I reckon it has gone far enough, and I am going to let up on all of you. You can go home now and tell them that I—or you, if you choose—broke off the engagement. It is all over. I have had my revenge, and every one is happy again. You can go back to the North and make love to your cold Northerners, and I shall go back to

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the dark corners. It seems strange though, after these two weeks, doesn't it?"

The man had been looking into her face, but it was only as she finished her last sentence that her eyes met his. She looked at him for several moments until the tears slowly filled her eyes. "Zoë," he said, "you are talking nonsense. I don't care what idea you may have had in the first place. I know how much I love you now, and I think I know how much you care for me."

The girl brushed the tears away, but did not again look at him. "Arthur," she said, "as you say, there is one right thing to do in this and in all cases, and a lot of wrong ones. I won you under false pretenses, and I am going to give you up. I owe it to you. I owe it to myself. I owe it to your family for all the pain I have given them. Then, I think, perhaps they will see there was something under the rouge after all.

"There is but one favor I still have to

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ask you, and if you love me as you say you do, I don't see how you can very well refuse me. You must leave me here now, and never try to see me again. I am to leave the Springs to-morrow, and you can spend the rest of the summer unmolested with your mother and your sister."

"And wherever you go," he said, "I am going with you."

"I wouldn't if I were you," she said, "because Crowley is going with me."

"Crowley?"

"Yes, Crowley. I am going to end my notorious career by running away with the richest man at the Springs. If you come back here a year from now, or later, you will find me a gay married woman. The rouge will be a little thicker, and my hair perhaps a little lighter, but I shall still be the same old Zoë White you used to know."

"And is this the girl," said Elton, "that I have heard talk as I have heard you talk of what a girl could do with her

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life and the life of the man that loved her?" She sat for a long time resting her chin in one hand, and looking across the valley.

"Yes," she said; "it's the same girl. She talked that way under very peculiar conditions. Did you ever notice those cobs of mine? Well, if you have, you will remember that Tatters isn't nearly as good as Rags; but drive them together, and Tatters can hold up his end every time: drive him single, and he isn't even fit for the roads about here. I don't know whether you see what I mean, but I've watched those horses so closely I see a likeness to them in everything. I was being driven at an unnatural gait, that's all. It couldn't last, because I couldn't stand the strain any more than old Tatters. It just showed me what a chance some girls have. But that is all over now forever."

Elton tried to put his arm about her and say something to her, but she angrily pushed him away, and then all the flush

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left her face just as suddenly as it had come, and she put her hand on his shoulder just as one man does to another when he wants to show his affection for him.

"Yes," she said; "you may kiss me again, but it is for the last time. I don't belong to you any more. You must go back at once. I've thought of this so long and so much, and I know it's best for both of us. For heaven's sake, Arthur, leave me now—won't you! Don't forget I am only a woman."

A FRIEND OF THE FAMILY



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Christie was very small, even for his tender years, and he had red hair and the freckles that always go with it. As far back as Christie could remember he had sold newspapers on the streets. The experience he had gained in this line was a very extensive one, and had completely destroyed any ideas he might otherwise have had of a domestic life. For the last few summers he had given up the paper business, and blackened boots on a ferry-boat. He might have done very well at this, but he preferred to sit on the deck and listen to the three Italians who played popular airs on a harp and two violins. On the last few trips Christie would generally find that he had no money to pay for his supper and lodging, so he would get down to

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work and try to make enough to keep him until the following day.

He was a very improvident character, was Christie, but he had no one depending on him, so it really did not make very much difference. It frequently happened that when night came on he found himself without any money at all. On these occasions he would spend the night at a shed on a pier in the East River.

Christie was a great favorite with the watchman at the pier, and the old man was always rather glad when the boy had had a bad day and was forced to spend the night in the shed, for Christie was very good company, and sat up until late at night telling the old man of his day's adventures, and making plans, and getting advice for the future. Young as he was, Christie had seen more of New York than most men of forty. He knew the Bowery and the East Side, every bit of it. As for the other side of the town, he did not care for it; his

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ambitions did not lie in that direction. He had already tired of New York, and wanted to get out in the world and travel from place to place. He was an enthusiastic admirer of the country and the water; and the little green parks of the metropolis, and even the waters of the bay, did not afford him sufficient of either. He was a born rover, and heartily dreaded any kind of regular employment. So far as he could see, to travel with a circus would about suit his ideas. But his friend of the pier looked to something higher for his protégé, and constantly told him of the many hardships the circus people had to endure: how they never slept, but worked all day and traveled at night. This view of the situation did not strike Christie's fancy at all. It was the music, the always changing crowd, and the out-of-door life that he wanted. Whenever he saw a circus billed he worked very hard and slept on the pier so that he might save enough money to be able to go just

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as often as possible. When the first day came for him to go he never did any work at all, but went over to the grounds early and talked to the tentmen and any one connected with the circus who would listen to him. The accounts they gave him were not very encouraging, and generally tallied with those of his friend on the pier; but Christie would not be convinced.

It was in the spring of the year, and Christie was not yet twelve years old, when he got a chance to satisfy his life's ambition. It was not a first-class circus, but it had two rings, and sometimes played as many as three days in one town. The duties assigned him were not very onerous, and his salary was correspondingly small. Before the performance began, he stood behind a wooden stand and helped a man to sell peanuts and lemonade. At eight o'clock they left the stand, and while the man carried around trays of lemonade Christie peddled peanuts among the audience.

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For all of this Christie was paid only five dollars a week, but he was pursuing his chosen profession, and was much happier than he had ever been before. His great pleasure was in the morning, when he rode a donkey in the procession, and afterward stood outside the tent and was surrounded by a circle of small boys of the town, and was sincerely envied as an attaché of "Clyde's Monster Allied Shows."

Marcus Clyde, the proprietor of the show, was perhaps no better or no worse than the proprietors of small circuses usually are. He had originally been a butcher, then a horse-dealer, and on account of some bad debts had taken an interest in a small circus. From silent partner he had drifted into sole proprietor. Now he wore a high silk hat, and a diamond horseshoe in his shirt-front, and drove about the circus grounds in a buggy, which was always taken along for his personal use. He knew the name of every man and woman con-

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nected with the show, and frequently superintended the raising of the tents when the manager, Mr. Ross, was indisposed or drunk. He knew Christie well, and frequently honored him with a ride in his buggy. On these occasions the red-haired boy amused him by recounting some of his escapades in New York. He used to embellish them a good deal, for Christie wanted to appear a person of importance in the eyes of his employer, and had, indeed, strong hopes of some day becoming a junior partner in the Allied Shows.

The proprietor's liking for the boy gave Christie a certain importance in the eyes of the other employees, and he was generally regarded as the mascot of the company. But Christie did not care very much for most of the people. He lavished all the affection he had on one family called Boynton. There was Boynton, his wife, and their little girl Patricia. The man did a bareback act, in which he was assisted by the little

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girl. The woman, who had been born a little above the circus business, confined herself to riding around the ring dressed in a habit and a high hat. She really rode very well, and the act was extremely popular with the masses.

The friendship between Christie and the family came about through the boy's devotion to the daughter Patricia, or "Patsy," as she was called by the circus people. She was very pretty, with long yellow hair and blue eyes, and Christie no sooner saw her than he found himself very much in love with her. The first time he saw Patsy was when she was doing her act with her father in the ring. Dressed in a short, red silk dress, with red stockings and gold shoes, she was led out from the dressing-tent. Her father took her on the horse with him. Then he stood up and held her out at arm's-length, with one of her feet resting on his hip, while the horse slowly galloped around the ring. The act ended with the little girl standing on his

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shoulders while the horse jumped some low hurdles. When, amid the shouts of the audience, Boynton led the girl from the ring, Christie followed her, and talked with her about her act, and how she had learned to do it, and what she generally thought about while she was doing it.

In a short time the two children became great friends, and the Boyntons almost adopted Christie as their own. The girls he had known in New York were very different from Patsy. So different was their language and the way they spoke it that the low English voice of this girl sounded almost like a different tongue to Christie. There was much time in which neither of them had anything to do, so the two children used to go on trips of exploration around the town in which the circus was stopping, or out into the country, where they played like other children who do not have to work for their living. As long as Christie was with her he did not think of the

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circus, and was only sorry when the time came for him to go back to the peanuts and the lemonade.

It does not take a girl of twelve very long to reciprocate such a strong passion as Christie's, so in a short time Patsy came to care for the boy as much as he did for her, and together they even planned to marry some day and have a circus of their own. He would have a buggy even better than Clyde's, and she would always drive by his side. Some day they would make enough money to retire, and together they would go back to her home in England, which she told Christie many times was the most beautiful place on earth.

It was in August that Boynton came to the manager one morning and said that his girl was too ill to appear. She had some sort of fever, and the doctor said she must not leave the hotel. Then he suggested that Christie might be allowed to try the act with him. The manager consented, and the horse was

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brought out into the ring, and Christie had his first rehearsal. It was not very difficult, and so long as he kept cool there was really very little danger of falling off. He was a little shaky at the afternoon performance, but at night he felt more at home, and when he had finished the act and ran out into the dressing-tent, with the applause of the crowd ringing in his ears, he was happier than he had been or ever hoped to be in his life. The next day Clyde got him a beautiful red suit of his own, with silver spangles all over it, and a white wig to cover his red hair, which, it was found, did not match with the red of his suit at all.

In a week Patsy was up again, had rejoined the circus, and was able to go on with her act. If it had been any one else than she, Christie would very seriously have objected to his return to the peanut-stand. But as long as it was Patsy, he was only too glad to see her out and able to start again on their long

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walks. But now that the ice had been broken, and Christie had been tried and not found wanting, Patsy often resigned her place in his favor, and he had many opportunities to wear the red tights and the white wig.

And yet Christie was not perfectly happy. He had seen so much of the Boyntons that he knew their affairs pretty well, and his New York training had not dulled his powers of taking in a situation. He knew that Mrs. Boynton was not altogether happy in her present position. She had left a comfortable home to run away with a circus performer, and had gradually drifted into the business herself. As time wore on, and the romance wore off, she put the blame of her position more and more on the man who had taken her from her home. As for Boynton, he worshiped his wife as much as men usually do who marry above them and are never allowed to forget it. He tried to keep her out of the ring and away from the public, but

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as long as she had to spend her life traveling she insisted on doing a turn, as it gave her a certain amount of excitement and a little more money for the winter months, when they were idle.

Now Christie had noticed that the relations between the two had been very strained of late, and he thought he knew the cause. There was a man connected with the business part of the circus who had been very attentive to Mrs. Boynton, and Christie saw that the husband was desperately jealous. The woman had always borne such a good reputation in the company that no one attached any importance to the affair, regarding Mrs. Boynton as perhaps a little foolish, but nothing more. The flirtation had been going on for several weeks, when they came to a little one-night stand in Connecticut. Patsy and Christie had gone out for a walk after the afternoon performance, and had eaten their supper in the tent with the other employees on their return. When Christie went to his

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stand that night the man asked him if he had heard the news.

"What news?" said Christie.

"Only Mrs. Boynton has run off with the business manager, Ross. That's all."

Christie looked very serious, and ran his fingers through his red hair. He had never had any experience in domestic tragedies before, and as a friend of the family his duties were not at all apparent to him at first; but after a few minutes' hesitation he went to look for Boynton. He found him alone in one of the small tents. It was dark, but Christie could hear him sobbing like a child.

"Do you and Patsy do the turn to-night, Mr. Boynton?" he said.

Boynton looked up suddenly, and then, seeing who it was, said:

"Yes, Christie; if I never do it again."

Christie stood for a moment in the doorway. He saw the man who had been as good as a father to him with

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his head buried in his hands and shaking from head to foot like a leaf trembling in the wind.

"Clyde would hardly expect it," he blurted out; "and really, Mr. Boynton, I'm afraid you're not fit."

"Don't you worry, Christie," said Boynton; "I'll be steady enough when the time comes."

But Christie did not think so. He saw the danger of accident or even death for the girl. He started off in pursuit of Patsy. He found her just as she was going into the women's dressing-tent. He recognized her by her long white ulster, and a big hat that shaded her pretty, delicate face. He called to her, and when he came up he saw that she knew nothing of what had happened.

"Patsy," he said, "I'd like very much to do the turn to-night."

"Why?" said Patsy.

Now Christie was usually very prompt with an answer, but it was different to-night as he talked with Patsy. He was

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very ill at ease, and hesitated some time before he spoke.

"Well," he said, after a long pause, "there's some boys out there in front, and I think I'd like them to see me in my red tights and the spangles, see?"

"Oh, all right," said Patsy; "I don't care."

"Do you mean it?" he replied. "Thank you ever so much."

"Your hand's as cold as ice," said the ring-master as he led Christie out.

"Think so?" said Christie. "Great house, isn't it?"

In a minute he was on the horse's back, and a moment later Boynton was holding him out at arm's-length. Christie saw that the rider was doing the act unconscious of everything about him. The man seemed dazed, and moved mechanically. If the horse had not been so well trained the act must have ended at once in a failure. As it slowed down to a walk Christie gave vent to a

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long sigh of relief. "That was easy enough," he said to himself; "but I wish I was over those five sticks."

The hurdles were brought out, and the horse started on a slow gallop around the ring. Boynton, who was probably unconscious of what he was doing, or over-anxious to get through the act and be alone away from the awful crowd, suddenly yelled to his horse. Christie, who was standing on the man's shoulders, felt the animal make a sudden start, and just managed to steady himself for the first hurdle.

"One—two—three—four," he counted, as the horse jumped each hurdle. In another second it would all be over. At the exit he saw Patsy standing. She was leaning against the band-stand with her hands stuck deep down in the pockets of her ulster. Then he looked at the man holding the last hurdle. As the horse jumped each stick, the man always lowered it; but now he was looking away from them, and might not lower it in

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time. The blood rushed to Christie's head. He felt as if a furnace was raging within him.

"Lower that hurdle, you d—!" The rest of the sentence was lost in the yells of the men and the shrieks of the women. The audience was on its feet. The horse had hit the stick with one of its forefeet. The man fell uninjured, but the boy was picked up with a deep cut just over his temple.

The ring-master called for any doctors that might be in the audience, and a little group of men followed the two attendants that carried the boy into the big dressing-tent. They laid him on a wooden chest, and covered the little body with the spangled clothes that hung about the tent. When he opened his eyes he saw the three Boyntons standing by his side.

"So you came back, did you?" said Christie.

"Yes, Christie. I hope it's not too late," sobbed Mrs. Boynton.

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"It's never too late," he said. "You're never going to leave Patsy again though, are you?"

"Never," she said.

"That's good, that's good," said Christie. "But what's the matter with the band? Why ain't it playin'? And the lights, they're all goin' out. Say, please don't leave me alone here when I'm hurt."

The proprietor stood in the back-ground, biting his nails. One of the attendants tiptoed noiselessly across the floor of the tent to his side.

"The audience, Mr. Clyde?" he said.

The proprietor looked up sharply.

"The audience be —"

He did not finish the sentence, for he saw the little group about Christie slowly turning their backs on the little rider and moving away.

"I guess you'd better tell 'em it's all over," he said.

AT A CAFÉ CHANTANT



AT A CAFÉ CHANTANT

It was at one of the cafés chantants that line the Champs Élysées. The stage performance had just come to an end, the crowd had quickly risen from their seats, and men and women were pushing and jostling each other down the narrow aisles to get near the dancing floor. A storm was coming, and the dances were sure to be very few. Great black clouds were fast hiding the blue starlit sky, and short, sharp gusts of wind twirled the red paper lanterns hanging to the trees around and around, and here and there tore them from the branches and dashed them to the ground. A few big warm drops had already fallen, and the quadrille dancers had taken their places on the parts of the floor which were covered by the heavy foliage of the trees. Men were running

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in all directions with long torches in their hands, relighting the gas jets as the wind blew them out in rapid succession. Pierre Latour turned up the collar of his ulster, and, with his hands stuck deep down in his pockets, was shuffling to the white and gold doors leading to the boulevard.

"Tie my shoe," said a voice.

The old man stopped suddenly in front of two of the women who sang in the concert. For a moment he hesitated.

"Be quick," said the girl; "I'm tired of standing on one foot."

The old man got down on his knees and tied the lace of the proffered shoe.

"You'd be willing enough to tie it if it was the shoe of Clothilde, would you not?"

The old man looked up at the girl and smiled.

"Yes," he said; "it is always my pleasure to assist an artiste."

"And what am I?" said the girl.

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"Oh, you do very well for the first number; empty benches are poor critics."

The old man chuckled to himself at his joke, and went on his way. He hurried out of the garden on to the boulevard, through the long lines of drivers snapping their whips in his face, and the crowd of boys calling the evening papers. The rain was falling quite steadily now, and the old man, walking close to the trees on the sidewalk, looked neither to the left nor right. He alternately cursed the rain and wind, and then forgot the storm in his favorite calculations of how much longer he would have to work at the Garden, and how soon he would be free to live and act as he chose. Ever since the Garden had been started he had sat at the stage door and guarded the entrance to what is commonly known as "behind the scenes" with a doggedness and irritability which had made him worthy of his hire. Every man and every woman of

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the Paris concert-hall stage knew him as one of the fixtures of the place. Every evening, as they passed from the Garden through the door leading to the dressing rooms, they stopped and said something pleasant to Pierre, but there was only one woman to whom he had ever responded or even raised his hat. She was the Clothilde, a woman whose name was just then on the lips of all Paris. Her songs were quoted in salons and her love affairs talked about on the boulevards. She had gained the fame which can only be won in one city in the world, a fame which is the highest award the Parisian seeks, to be the idol of that one town. To the Parisian, success in England and America means money; in Paris, fame, true luxury, and, for the moment, a feverish contentment. Pierre regarded her in the light of an artiste only. The stories of her life did not affect him one way or another. He looked for her coming every night, and as she passed through the door which he

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carefully guarded he rose from his air and made her a low bow. When she came on the stage he watched her every movement and listened to her every note. It was only when she forgot herself so far as to throw a glance of recognition at some of her friends in the seats or boxes that he found fault with her. Some of her songs he had heard night after night for months, and each time he loved them the more. He watched for every point, and if she uttered a word or failed in a suggestion, murmured monosyllables of disapprobation to himself. His admiration of her was one of the jests of the place, and the other women of whom he did not approve lost no opportunity to speak of what they called Father Pierre's love air. He had seen hundreds of women sing on the same stage. Some had failed completely, and some had gained fame and comparative fortune. Some had stood still and continued to sing a few stupid ballads in the earlier part of

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the programme, while others had graduated to opera bouffe. But to Pierre there had been but one Clothilde. She represented art to him in its highest form, and as long as she continued at the Garden he was content to accept his four francs a night, and to worship her from his seat at the end of the stage. But the life of the goddess of the Parisian concert-hall stage is a short one. Some day she would leave the Garden, and Pierre wanted to leave with her. For years he had laid away part of his salary, and the sum had grown to a little fortune for a Frenchman of his position in life. In two years, at the outside, he would leave the Garden and buy a little place in the country, where he could rest and work an hour or two each day in his own field. His pleasures in life were a curious contrast—flowers and the songs of Clothilde.

The storm had broken and the sheets of rain driving in the old man's face suddenly recalled him to his surround-

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ings. As he turned from the boulevard into the little street leading to his lodgings a flash of lightning suddenly turned the black night into the vivid whiteness of noonday. The tall yellow buildings seemed to reach almost to the heavens, and the trees with their dripping leaves stood out clearly defined against the white sky. The old man suddenly stopped, half-curious, half-alarmed. At the foot of one of the trees he saw a young girl standing, with her hair flying loosely in the wind and both her hands clutching at the shawl wrapped closely about her throat. As the thunder rolled over the old man's head, and darkness once more settled over all, he still stood and gazed at the spot where he had seen the figure. Yes, it was still there. He could see only the outlines now, but he could tell it was the figure of a woman. He walked close to it.

"What are you doing here?" he said.

For a moment there was no answer.

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The slight figure leaned nonchalantly against the tree.

"Oh, I don't know," she said. "Where can I go?"

"Where can you go?" said Pierre. "To your home, of course. This is no night for such a girl as you to be in the streets."

The old man's eyes were becoming more used to the darkness now, and he could see the girl shrug her shoulders. Pierre took a step as if to go on his way, and then stopped again.

"Where is your home?" he asked brusquely.

"My home?" said the girl. "In the country, very far from here."

"Have you no friends?"

"No," again answered the girl; "no friends nor money."

Again there was a flash of light, and the old man looked curiously into the speaker's face. It was a face he had never seen before. The black, bright eyes, set far apart under a broad, white

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forehead, looked steadily at him. Her long dark hair blew loosely in the wind, and there was something in her expression which was unlike anything Pierre had ever seen in another woman's face.

"Come with me," said the old man, and he half led and half dragged her through the narrow street to the door of his home. He rang the bell, and the door swung slowly back. He pushed the girl in front of him, and then led her to his rooms. In the light of the little apartment he once more turned to study his new friend. She was very slight, perhaps fifteen years of age, and fairly pretty. The girl threw an unconcerned glance about the room, and then drew a chair to the hearth, where there was a little fire burning, and sat down, resting her chin between her hands.

"What are you," said the old man, "flesh and blood or a devil? Have you no answer?"

The girl looked up and smiled gently

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at him. "I am very hungry," she said; "have you nothing to eat?"

Pierre threw off his dripping coat and, going to the cupboard, took down some bread and a bottle of wine.

"There," he said, "eat and drink. It may loosen your tongue."

The girl drew her chair close to the table, and fell to at the little supper as one starved. When she had finished she reached across the table and, taking the old man's hand in both of hers, kissed it and then smiled up into his face.

"I came to Paris," she said, "because I was not happy in my home. I ran away. I am very sleepy. Can I rest here?"

That night the old man lay in his kitchen on the floor. He did not sleep, for he felt that God had sent him a little child to comfort him in his old age, and he must needs lie awake and plan for the welfare of his charge.

From that time on life was not the same to Pierre. He still went to the

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Garden at night and still worshiped the art of Clothilde, but the days were very different. Cecile he called her, and if she had been his child from the day of her birth he could not have watched over her or guarded her with greater care. In the mornings he taught her from the books he had studied when a child, and in the afternoons they either walked out to the Bois and watched the long lines of great people in their carriages, or sat far back under the trees away from the crowd and read aloud to each other. At night she read alone in her rooms, for he did not care for her to visit with the neighbors, or sometimes, as a great treat, he took her to the Garden, where she sat by his side and watched the performance on the mirrored stage. In his later life he often recalled the first time he had taken her. For weeks she had heard him tell of Clothilde, this woman of all women the most blessed. A woman but a few years older than herself who earned hundreds of francs a night,

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whose picture was in every shop window, whose name was in every newspaper and on the lips of every man and every woman in Paris. The girl waited for her entrance almost breathlessly. At last she heard a sudden burst of applause, the stage was empty, but she knew that it meant that Clothilde was coming. She saw a beautiful woman in a simply-made ball dress, and heard her sing as she had never heard any one sing before. To her this woman of the stage was something unreal, something altogether above other women. Pierre for once did not look at the great artiste, his eyes were fixed on his daughter. It was the happiest night of his life, as he knew it was Cecile's.

That night they talked of nothing else. Hereafter she was to be their first thought; another tie which bound them the closer together. A week later Cecile began to take music lessons, and the first songs she learned were the simplest of those of Clothilde. Pierre could not

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afford a piano, but he had played the guitar in his younger days, and so he taught Cecile. Night after night, after they had finished their early supper, the old man sat at the window while the girl sang to him. If it was not Clothilde, it was his own child, and that meant very much to Pierre.

But in time the voice grew stronger, and the slight figure of Cecile was becoming more that of the woman and less of the girl. "So much the better," said Pierre, "when the time shall have come for us to leave Paris and go to our home in the country. Every night and day, too, will she sing to me then, and when I am too old to work she will go into the garden and work for me."

The other thought came to him later. It was in winter, and he was sitting at the fire and listening to the girl singing a very simple ballad of Béranger.

"Why not?" he said to himself; "why not?"

And from that time on the life of

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Pierre Latour had but one end. Cecile should be the successor of Clothilde and he would be her father. The day would come that he would no longer sit at the stage door, but would move about the Garden where he chose. The managers would doff their hats to him. He would be pointed at as the father of Cecile, the greatest artiste in Paris. The country was well enough for the poor man, but he was not to be poor much longer. He was to have a house near the Bois and a carriage with footmen. He would drive with her every fine day to the Cascade, and all the people in the carriages would say, "That is Cecile," and then ask who was the fine-looking old man, sitting at her side. The money he had saved should no longer lie idle in the bank. It should be spent on her. There should be no risks about it. She must succeed, and it should be all his work; all the result of his thought and years of labor.

But of all this he said nothing to her. He engaged a better singing-master, and

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allowed her to go to the theaters oftener and see all the great artistes. "It would broaden her and better fit her for her life," he said.

One evening he came home and found her trembling with excitement. Her master was to give a concert, and had asked her to sing. But Pierre would not hear of it. He abused the master for a meddling fool and forbade the girl to sing before any one without his permission.

"But he says I am his best pupil," she argued with tears in her eyes.

"He don't know," said Pierre. "You would be disgraced; I will not have it."

But Cecile's chance came sooner than Pierre had expected. Clothilde was to go into opera bouffe and leave the café chantant stage forever. Cecile was just eighteen, but she had knowledge far beyond her years, and the old man knew that she could not fail. His many years at the Garden had given him many privileges, and so he went to the manager

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and told him of his child. The manager laughed at the old man, but Pierre would not be denied.

"Do you think I cannot tell an artiste after all these years?" he asked.

"I believe you did like Clothilde," said the manager. "Bring your girl to-morrow morning, and I will try her."

A few days later short paragraphs were inserted in the daily papers concerning the retirement of Clothilde from the garden she had so long graced with her presence, and a few words were added about the unknown girl who was to attempt to fill her place. Then came the posters, the signed work of one of the cleverest artists in Paris. Cecile spent her days at her lessons and the dressmaker's. Her dress was to be very simple, a white silk with just a black ribbon here and there to set it off. Her father went with her to buy her gloves, so much depended on them. They were black, and so long that only a few inches of her clear white skin

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showed between them and the black bows at her shoulder. From a wild, elfish girl Cecile had grown into a handsome woman. The great mass of black hair and the bright eyes were still the same, but her features, like her figure, had developed and changed greatly for the better. To old Pierre she had always been beautiful, how beautiful he did not know; but he would learn on the night, for good looks go far with the audience of a *café chantant*.

A week before her *début* Pierre gave up his position as doorkeeper, and spent his time fussing over his child and worrying the manager with suggestions for the first night. Every day he walked along the boulevards and stopped in front of the *affiches* to look at the picture of his child. "Very good, very chic," he said; "but not so beautiful as she. No, not nearly so beautiful."

Pierre and Cecile drove to the garden in a *fiacre*. Her dress was in her trunk, and she had brought one of her neigh-

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bors to act as maid. The old man tried to talk easily of the weather and of the passing fancies, as if the night was just like any other night and not the most important in both of their lives. The girl sat quite silent and looked at her hands lying idly in her lap. Her mind was very far away from Pierre and the lights of the passing carriages. As they passed into the garden one of the men was lighting the great line of gas jets in the colored globes that surround the garden. As the old man and the girl in her long cloak swept by him he raised his hat, but Pierre gave him no heed. Cecile went to her dressing-room, and the old man took his seat in a box and waited. When the concert began not half a dozen rows were filled up, but when the first part of the programme was ended not a seat in the place was empty. Every box and every space where a chair could be placed was taken. Men crowded the aisles, and the rear of the garden was a bank of faces and high

hats. The man who preceded Cecile took one encore, and then, in answer to the applause that greeted it, bowed to the audience and pointed to the wings. There was a very slight mist over Pierre's eyes, but he could see the figure in the white silk dress and the black bows standing in the center of the stage. She was inclining her head very slightly, but unless the old man's ears failed him, the audience was quite still. The orchestra repeated the first bars of her song, and then the sweet girlish voice of his child floated out over the orchestra and the heads of the crowd to his ears. It was not a very nice song; in fact, the moral was very bad. But the simplicity of the singer gave it a certain chic which was just what the audience wanted, and they applauded the débutante liberally. The old man held on to the arm of the chair in which he sat with both hands.

"Wait," he said to himself; "wait. The next song. Then we will see."

Again the girl came down to the foot-

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lights of the mirrored stage, and the orchestra began the opening bars of the second song. The old man could hear her quite plainly now. She was quiet and very self-possessed. He most imagined for a moment that she had seen him and was smiling at him, but really she was only making a note in her song. At the end of the first verse the audience was quite still; a carafe rattled and the rattling of the broken glass echoed throughout the place. But when one looked about; even the man who had dropped it did not take his eyes from the white figure on the stage. At the next verse, another moment of silence then came the last verse, sung with such art so true, so fine, that the hush in the house was painful. The girl left the stage before a few men realized that a great woman was leaving them, and the applause, which was first scattered over the audience, suddenly swept like a tidal wave of sound from one end of the Garden to the other.

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Women waved their handkerchiefs and the men their hats, and shouted their applause. To the audience there was nothing but an empty stage before them and the echo of a song marvelously sung echoing in their ears. As the storm of applause broke, the old man jumped from his seat and ran to the entrance leading to the stage. He saw his girl standing near the entrance, leaning against the back of one of the flies. He tried to speak to her, but tears were in his eyes and the words he tried to say would not pass his lips. With a sob he fell to his knees and kissed the tips of her long black gloves. The hand was suddenly drawn away from him, and the old man was left kneeling alone. The woman who had helped Cecile dress came to him and helped him to his feet.

"I will go home at once," he said. "There is much to do, besides it is too hard on me; I cannot stand it any longer. Bring her home immediately she has finished."

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A few minutes later the old man was being driven rapidly through the lighted boulevards towards his home. He hurried up to his rooms and began at once to prepare for the coming home of Cecile. He laid a fresh tablecloth, and took down from his shelves the best china he owned. It was very rare china he had bought many years ago, and it looked very bright and cheerful under the yellow rays of the candles. From the kitchen he carried a basketful of the best things he had been able to buy and a bottle of champagne, which he had put in a bucket of ice before he left for the theater. Of all of this he had not dared speak to Cecile. If she failed, it would comfort her. If she succeeded, it would be a feast fit for Clothilde herself.

He laid the table for two. "Just we two," he said. "Later, when we are rich, we shall entertain our friends; but to-night this shall be for ourselves—for ourselves."

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As the sound of carriage wheels rattling over the pavement below reached his ears the old man went to the mirror and arranged his tie and carefully buttoned up the old-fashioned coat he always wore on great occasions. Then he took his stand by the grate, where there was a little fire burning, just enough to give the room a cheery look. The table with its fresh linen and the good things to eat stood in the middle of the room where she could not fail to see it as she entered.

There was the swish of skirts in the narrow hallway, the door was thrown suddenly back, and Cecile fairly ran into the room. Without glancing at the table, she went to the old man's side.

"Pierre," she cried, "I just stopped in to tell you that I am going to supper with some of the people at the theater. Just think of it, a supper all in my honor! Good-bye, Pierre."

She suddenly caught one of the old man's hands and kissed it. "Good

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night; don't wait up for me. Good night."

For a moment Pierre stood quite still at the hearth. He drew the sleeve of his coat slowly across his forehead as if he were confused and could not understand just what had happened. Then quite deliberately he unbuttoned his coat and, taking it off, laid it carefully away. He put on his working-blouse, and sat down to the table by himself; but his mind was very far away from the table or the room in which he sat. He was thinking of a stormy summer night, three years before, on the boulevard, and of the little waif he had found and to whom he had given shelter. He took a roll from the table and mechanically put it to his mouth; but the crumbs fell to his plate and he tossed the piece of bread back on the table. Through the open casement he heard the faint rumble of a carriage. He went to the window just in time to see a fiacre, holding two men and two women, turn the corner lead-

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ing from his little street into the boulevard. Ever so far he could hear the loud voices of the men and the laughter of the women.

"Good-bye, my little girl," he said; "good-bye. It was I who made you what you are—I give you to Paris."

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THE STORY OF HIS LIFE



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When I first met Marshall Bellows he was a member of the American colony in Florence. He was perhaps forty years old, with clean-cut features, a smooth-shaven face, and dark-brown hair turning gray at the temples; and he was always well dressed. I met him at the English club, where he was well-known and liked for his pleasant manners and sociable temper. He was also more properly a member of an unnamed club which meets at a certain well-known Florentine café. There is a bar in front, where the Italians buy their vermouth, and at the back of the room there are a number of tables at which every day about noon, and again later on at four o'clock, you may see the same men, principally Americans and English.

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These are the men who were. They are generally past their prime of life, certainly past their prime of usefulness. There are both rich and poor among them, and for the most part they are intellectual. The past is the topic of their talk, and their every word spells failure. Sometimes, very late in the afternoon, there are regrets for the days that are gone; the present and the future are by tacit understanding forbidden subjects. Where these men live when they are not at the café I do not know. Their hours of meeting are to them the hours of the day. It is then that they are at their best, and it is by them that I believe they would prefer to be judged.

Marshall Bellows was the newest member of this club. He had come to Florence because the life of leisure seemed to flow so freely and uninterruptedly there. One day seemed so much like the others, and the sunlight so good for thoughts of the past, and the still, quiet nights for perfect rest,

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and both day and night so free from the noise and turmoil of the great cities.

Bellows had spun the yarn which he called the story of his life some years before, when he was about to start on his real career. She was a pretty girl, with a nice, small figure; and, like Bellows, she had fine ideals. He had first met her at a country-house and had lived under the same roof with her for one week; and in consequence for months afterward he had followed in her wake, thankful for any odd moments she could spare to him. She smiled on him till the time came when she met the man who, she thought, fulfilled all the ideals of her twenty years. It may be observed on passing that he fulfilled none of them; but he has nothing to do with this story. He became a most placid member of society, and his wife lost her pretty figure and forgot the fine schemes she had laid out for herself and society. She tried to devote them all to him in the first few weeks of her married life;

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but they fell on stony places, and she gave them up about the time that she closed forever the volume of Beethoven's symphonies on the drawing-room piano. The result was a mild, full-faced husband and a plump mother, too well-bred to speak of her own children's virtues, but full of unpleasant information about the offspring of her intimate friends.

But to return to Bellows. He took what seemed to him the sensible course. He left the country with a good photograph of a fine, lithe example of the best type of American girl in his portmanteau; and to him she remained a fine, lithe American girl always. He at first lived quietly at boarding-houses in Switzerland, because the scenery seemed very grand and it was generally lonely; afterward he spent the money he had thus saved at Monte Carlo. He became an incident in the life of the American colony at Paris, and learned to drive a coach up the Champs Élysées; and

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afterwards, through his gains at Long-champs and Auteuil, he became a conspicuous figure for all the women who came to Paris to wonder at. And yet he was not happy. Somewhere in the country that he had denied there was that delicate framework, that high type of womanhood who had cast her lot with another. He never climbed a mountain in Switzerland that he did not secretly hope to find her sitting disconsolate on the peak, and liable to be blown off at any moment but for his timely appearance. At Monte Carlo he wanted to break the bank, not so much to revenge mankind or to win the money, as to have the fact telegraphed to America and make her think that he was a much finer fellow than she had originally supposed, or that he was going to the devil very quickly and for all time. When he moved from the Riviera to Paris he studied the papers to learn what Americans had arrived at what hotels; and he drove his coach with the sole purpose

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that she might see him perched up so very high. and looking so very fine. Whether she did or not he never knew, as he failed to reach a point where the four horses were not sufficient to occupy his entire attention.

After a few years of unproductive traveling, always accompanied by her photograph and a dog, which animal his reading and knowledge of the drama had taught him to be always necessary to a man crossed in love, he returned to America and the home that he knew before he met her. But he found that these years of travel had unloosed most of his old acquaintances, and even his friends. It was not, after all, much to wonder at. He had brought back nothing to tell, and he had thought so much of his own story that it had to a certain extent affected at least his value as a companion. And so, after a half-hearted welcome and three months of indifference, he called on his lawyer and his banker, and having confided his chief

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difficulties to his dog, he turned his back forever on the land which he really loved and for which a few years since he had hoped to do so many and such noble things. All of which was of course a pity, and happened simply because the man needed one noble passion for one woman or one thing instead of doling out his sentiment and his fine ambitions on a romance which was not a romance at all, but only a very youthful imitation of one.

When Bellows returned to his exile abroad he decided to forget the past at his easel. He had a pretty talent for drawing; even now there are two prints from his sketches in a window on the Via dei Pucci, and although they are of a rather modern girl, and although they are hung among the rough sketches of some old masters, yet there is something in them—that something which for lack of a better name critics call promise. He also did a little modeling, but he got no further than the copying period, and

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as a matter of fact, I believe, never has anything cast. But music was the race upon which Bellows's friends pinned their faith and their apologies for his other failures. He certainly had a good knowledge of technique and played with a deal of feeling; but his music always left his listeners in such a dreary frame of mind that even that accomplishment was not entirely successful. He has rooms very near the Cascine, and he has made them beautiful with old furniture and brocades and good pictures and glass and silver and tapestries—in fact all the things on which the last few hundred years of Italy have placed their stamp of approval. In one corner of the drawing-room there was an old carved desk, with a great flat top and drawers down either side. In one of these Bellows had packed away the practical story of his life. This to him was the one thing that he *had* done, and he believed that he had done it well. Every man, they say, can write one story, and Bel-

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lows had written his. He had worked on it for a long time, and from a mere sketch it had grown into a fairly long story, full, so Bellows thought, of fine ideas and pricking sarcasms. When he was gone the world was to have it, and find regret in it for the past and a little warning for the future. Bellows laid no claims to any unusual ability as an author, but there was one thing he thought he did know, and that was woman; and while he had been in his opinion fair and just to her, he had at least been conscientiously truthful. He believed that he had combined the wit of a Sydney Smith, the cynicism of a Gilbert, and the analysis of a Bourget in that one short story. Perhaps it was all that he claimed for it; but as a matter of fact no one was ever allowed to read it. It was a very sacred thing to Bellows, and it was only very late in the afternoon, when the talk at the club grew confidential, that it was even mentioned.

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It must be said for Bellows that he complained to no one, and doled out the sentiment and the passion of his life alone. He took long drives through the Cascine, and if there was a crowd he would leave his carriage and walk down through the narrow shaded walks or out on the little gravel path that runs along the Arno. It was a pathetic sight to see him standing there alone, late in the afternoon, leaning over the railing with the little river running at his feet, and across the stream the green banks, and beyond and above all the faint pink sky shading into the first gray shades of the coming evening. It was pathetic because it all meant so little to one to whom it might and should have meant so much. He was not looking at, but through, one of the greatest pictures nature ever painted. He did not see the green grass and the last glow from the hot crimson sun that had sunk behind the hills; he saw nothing but a waste of years, a waste of his own life scorched

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of its noble ideals, a succession of petty triumphs and great failures.

He could be seen almost any night at the opera, sitting alone in the pit, intent as any master could have been, but after all it was only an accompaniment to his own thoughts. He was setting the music of Gounod and Verdi to his own words, to the story of his life lying in the desk at home. The heroine was always the same. Many years had passed since he had seen her, and she had grown stout and somewhat careless in her dress, as even the best of women will sometimes forget themselves in their children; but to him she was always the same, pretty and graceful and young; and he, as he listened to the music, became young, too, and forgot the gray temples and the sharp lines cutting into his forehead.

But in time Bellows was no longer to be seen on the banks of the Arno and ceased to frequent the opera. He spent more of his time at the café, and the club often broke up in the late afternoon and

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left him sitting alone before the marble table and the empty glasses. Men who stepped in for a glass of vermouth before a late dinner would find him still sitting there in the deserted room looking intently across it at the gray-painted wall.

Men who live in Tuscany, and are not content with the wine of the country, are well enough when the *tramontana* winds blow down from the snow-covered mountains and bluster and scream through the high, narrow streets, and again when the rain and snow-storms drive the men and horses into shelter; but it is very different when the sun blazes out and turns its hot rays into every narrow lane, and makes the Lung' Arno fit only for dogs. Then the man who is not content with the wine of the country finds, after he crosses a piazza, that the merciless sun has turned the streets into avenues of white chalk, and the gray-green tops of the olive trees on the hills form themselves into a

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crooked black line against a milk-white sky.

Bellows turned on his pillow and looked sleepily at the clock on the mantel-piece. It was just seven, and the April sun fell in a long unbroken shaft across the bed. There was something about the flood of the early morning sunshine that made him think of a room he had had in a little cottage at home. He used to spend his summers there, and every fine morning the sun used to awaken him from a long, fresh sleep, and he would lie there in the yellow light and listen to the hens cackling and the cocks crowing just outside his door. Bellows always used to say that these were the happiest days of his life. Things that he had done in those early days seemed to come back to him this morning very clearly; he recalled certain games he had played, and long days when he had sat silently in his boat with a rod in his hand, or had tramped over

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the marshes with a gun under his arm. And then quite unconsciously he began to whistle softly a song he used to sing a very long time before.

"That's funny," he said, half-aloud; "everything seems so clear this morning."

There was no headache and no pain, nothing but a little weakness in his arms and lips. His head was so very clear, and everything in the room seemed to stand out so much more sharply and to mean so much more than it ever had meant before. For a moment he thought he would ring for his servant, but he changed his mind and tossed the clothes off his bed. He put on his slippers and his dressing-gown and walked out into the drawing-room. It was still cold, so he lit the fire and then walked out into the sunshine of the balcony. The sky was the light blue of the clear Italian morning, and the stony street lay very white and clean and almost deserted in the early sun. He looked down at the

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entrance of the Cascine and saw, through the mist floating from off the river, two men leisurely crossing the piazza on their way to work. Across the street in front of the theater a man was pasting up the bills for the opera that night. He tried to read the letters of the name, and then it suddenly occurred to him that it did not make much difference after all, at least to him. He shrugged his shoulders slightly, and stepped back into the room. The fire was crackling on the hearth, and the room looked very bright and snug with its red curtains and the deep brown walls. He stood quite still for some moments, looking curiously round at the beautiful things he had gathered about him. And then he suddenly remembered that probably he would not see them again. They would be stripped from their places and scattered broadcast over the world. In a short time there would be another master here, and the individuality and the atmosphere which he had given to

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the place through these material things would have 'passed away. Surely there was something he would leave behind! It was true the pictures were not of his brush; some were by great men of this time whom he had known, and others were the work of men who died when men knew really how to paint. On the shelves there was no book that bore his name; the music on the rack was the inspiration of masters who had died and left humanity their debtor for all time. Even the tapestry and the china, even the very silk of the curtains had been made by a people who were great in their own way, and who had been buried with the secret of their knowledge.

Bellows pulled the girdle of his dressing-gown tightly about him. Surely there must be something! The photographs scattered about were the likenesses of pretty women whom he had not known for years, or of singers from the cafés chantants, whose names and good wishes written across the face he

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had bought with bank-notes. He turned slowly from one wall to another, from the Eastern rugs under his feet to the old frescoes of the cupids on the ceiling. And then for a moment his eyes rested on the desk.

Yes, there ~~was~~ something; that manuscript, his own story. He took it from the drawer, and began to read it, although he knew every word by heart. He turned the first few pages over very slowly and read what he had written with much care. His brain seemed so much stronger this morning, and everything so much clearer and so much more as it used to be when he was younger and gave things the value they deserved, the value the world put upon them. Half sitting on the desk, he turned the leaves of the manuscript slowly until he had read the story through. For a moment he still rested against the desk and looked across the room to the long, high window and the old lace curtains moving slowly

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about in the first breeze of the morning. He pressed his lips tightly together, and then his face relaxed into a smile; but it was a face in which there was no gladness, a smile that men wear who are called by the world good losers.

"It is very strange," he said to the long window and the fluttering curtains, "but I really thought the story was new and good; this morning it seems that it is very old. It's the story that every man and every woman could write, did they wish to tell of one happy or unhappy time in their own life. It has been told a thousand times, and very much better than I have told it."

He carried the bundle of paper to the open hearth and let it fall from his hand among the burning coals. For a moment they divided it into two high points, and then a tiny blue flame caught the corner of the package and curled the pages one by one until a chance flame turned the whole into a blazing mass.

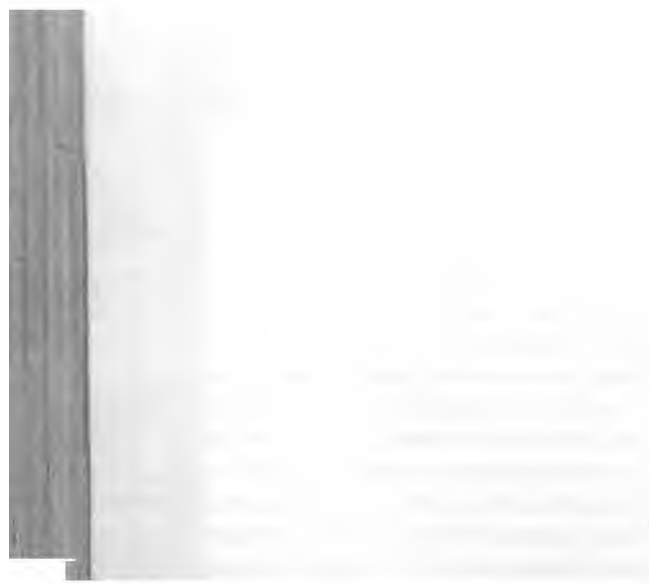
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Bellows stood with his arm on the shelf above the fire and his head resting on the back of his hand. He watched the flames rise and fall and leave his story a charred, black, useless mass in the red embers.

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It is under no circumstances to be taken from the Building

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